2.

FIVE SERMONS

Preached before and after

THE

CELEBRATION

OF THE

Lord's Supper.

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THE PREFACE.

THE following *Sermons* need no *Recommendation*. The known Worth of the *Author*, the *Subjects* treated of, the *Spiritual Dexterity* diſcovered in handling them, will, I hope, ſufficiently recommend them unto all ſuch as ſhall, with an humble and ſerious *Mind*, peruſe them.

THE *Author's Portraiture* is ſo fairly drawn, partly by *himſelf*, in theſe of his Writings already publiſhed, partly by his *Friends*, who have given the World an Account of his Character; that it wants not my *Pencil* to illuminate any Part of it. Yet I do, with a particular Pleaſure, own, That being of his Acquaintance

about the Space of 14 Years, and having frequently had Occaſion of Converſe with him, I wanted not Opportunity to obſerve that in him, which exceedingly endeared him unto me, and made me reckon it a great Happineſs to have had ſuch Intimacy with him. Beſides his *ſolid Learning*, his *clear* and *penetrating Judgment*, his *acute Reaſoning*, his *eminent Piety*, and other excellent Endowments, there was one Thing, I could not but highly value in his Converſe, That according to the Apoſtles Advice, *Eph.* iv. 29. *What proceeded out of his Mouth was good, to the Uſe of Edifying, which might miniſter Grace to the Hearers.* So that I may truly ſay, I was ſeldom in his Company, but it was mine own Fault if I was not edified.

And here alſo I crave Leave to remark, That notwithſtanding the Pregnancy of his *Parts*, and his Knowledge in the *Myſtery of Redemption through Chriſt*, above many; yet no Man was leſs fond of Novelty in Divinity, nor more careful to *hold faſt the Form of ſound Words*. He was indeed an Enemy to *Legal Preaching*, and was under no ſmall Fears of the Prevailing of a *Legal Spirit*, both in Miniſters and People. But at the ſame Time, he was very far from running to the other *Extreme*. He knew well, that

it

it had been the ſpecial Mercy of this Church, to keep the Golden Mean betwixt the *Pelagian Scheme* on the one Hand, and the *Antinomian* on the other; that is, the glorious *Grace* of God in *Chriſt*, in a great Meaſure deny'd by the former, in all its ſeveral Shapes; ſo the latter, under a Pretence (nay perhaps, in ſome, from a real Deſign) of exalting the *Riches* and *Freedom of Grace*, does exceedingly diſparage it. And in this he trode the Steps of theſe burning and ſhining *Lights* of this Church, who, in the laſt Age, made it their great Buſineſs, both in Preaching and Writing, to caution People againſt both theſe *Extremes*.

THE Subjects inſiſted on in this Book, as they are of the greateſt *Importance* to the Souls of Men, ſo they are exceeding ſweet and precious, and very ſuitable to the ſpecial Occaſions, upon which theſe Diſcourſes were prepared and delivered. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is our great Goſpel-Feaſt, at which the People of God are entertained with *fat Things full of Marrow, and Wines on the Lees well refined*. In this bleſſed *Ordinance, Chriſt the Wiſdom and Power of God is evidently ſet forth, crucified before our Eyes*. Here it is, that the Lord is graciouſly pleaſed

pleaſed, ſometimes to give ſpecial *Manifeſtations* of himſelf to the Souls of his People, which they are called to improve for their *Confirmation* and *Eſtabliſhment*. In attending upon this Solemnity in a due Manner, the Lord vouchſafes to his own the ſweet *Influences* of his Spirit and Grace, whereby their Souls are *refreſhed* and *revived* after ſad *Decays*: And ſerious Souls ordinarily have never more ardent *Deſires* after, and fervent *Longings* for the *breaking of that glorious Day, when all Shadows ſhall for ever flee away*, than when they come from this precious Ordinance, which is one of the neareſt Reſemblances of Heaven, that we enjoy here upon Earth.

As to the *Author*'s *managing* of theſe *Subjects*, the Diſcourſes will ſpeak for themſelves. I ſhall only ſay, that, modeſtly ſpeaking, ſomething, well worth the Reader's Peruſal, may be expected upon ſuch Arguments from one who had really *taſted that the LORD is gracious*; who felt the Power of theſe Truths on his own Spirit, which he delivered unto others; who knew well how to *comfort others with that Comfort wherewith he himſelf had been comforted of God*; and who, in a Word, was a Workman that *needed not to be aſhamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth*: And I perſwade

my

my ſelf, that ſuch as read them in a ſuitable Manner, ſhall not find their Expectation fruſtrated.

HAD the now glorified Author deſigned them for the Preſs, or review'd them, with an Eye to the publiſhing of them, they would no doubt have come forth in a better Dreſs, being only written in order to his preaching them to a popular Audience, and not ſo full perhaps as delivered, partly through Want of Time, partly through bodily Indiſpoſition: But even under theſe, and other Diſadvantages of an alike Nature, ſuch as have reviſed them, are not afraid to venture them abroad as they are, being confident that not only the Matter, but even the Method and Stile will be found acceptable, and, in a ſpecial manner, adapted to the Reliſh of Perſons *exerciſed unto Godlineſs*.

I conclude, with wiſhing that the *Lord* himſelf, who only can give the *Increaſe*, may be graciouſly pleaſed to accompany theſe Five Sermons with his effectual Bleſſing, and make them eminently ſucceſsful in promoting the great Ends of his own Glory, and the Good of Souls.

THE

THE CONTENTS.

SERMON I.

The LORD's Feaſt:

OR, THE

Entertainments of GOD's Houſe,

Opened from

ISAIAH XXV. 6.

And in this Mountain ſhall the LORD of Hoſts make unto all People a Feaſt of fat Things, a Feaſt of Wines on the Lees, of fat Things full of Marrow, of Wines on the Lees well refined.

SERMON II.

CHRIST crucified:

OR,

The Wiſdom and Power of God in him, rendring the Goſpel-Call effectual:

FROM

FROM

I. Cor. i. 23.

But we preach Chriſt crucified, unto the Jews a ſtumbling Block, and unto the Greeks, Fooliſhneſs.

Verſe 24. *But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Chriſt* (viz. Crucified) *the Power of God, and the Wiſdom of God.*

SERMON III.

Divine Manifeſtations,

WITH

Their Ends and Advantages iſſuing in Chriſtian Obedience and Eſtabliſhment:

FROM

Matth. xvii. 5.

While he yet ſpake, behold a bright Cloud overſhadowed them, and behold a Voice out of the Cloud, which ſaid, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed, hear ye him.

SER-

SERMON IV.

Divine Influences:

OR,

The Caſe and Cure of theſe under Spiritual Decays.

FROM

HOSEA xiv. 5.

I will be as the Dew unto Iſrael: *He ſhall grow as the Lilly, and caſt forth his Roots as* Lebanon.

SERMON V.

The Flight of Shadows,

AND

The Eternal Day-Break, for the Comfort of benighted Souls.

FROM

CANT. ii. 17.

Until the Day break, and the Shadows flee away. Turn my Beloved, and be thou like a Roe, or a young Hart upon the Mountains of Bether.

Advertiſement.

THAT there are Ten Times as many Sacramental Sermons by the ſame Author, as theſe come out in this Set; wherefore, if theſe now publiſhed meet with the Entertainment expected, and that ſome judicious Miniſters and private Chriſtians think they deſerve, ſo that it may be hoped, the reſt may prove at once acceptable and edifying, the Publick may expect to ſee more publiſhed from Time to Time, Four, Five, or Six Sermons at once.

In doing whereof, Care will be taken to claſs them into ſome ſuitable Order, where the Dependance and Connection of one with another, at leaſt as to Matter, ſhall be obſerved in each Set: And ſuch as ſhall continue to encourage the Deſign till all be printed, or ſo far as ſhall be thought fit to proceed in it, will find the Letter and Paper the ſame in all, ſo that they may put as many into one Volume as they ſhall think fit.

But that the Reader may have ſome View of the Purpoſes and Contents of theſe

theſe that remain, and ſee how well the Texts are choſen, there's hereunto annexed an Account of the Texts themſelves, with the Scope and Drift of each, ſuppoſing they may come forth Five together, as now in the foregoing Sheets; for this Time it may ſuffice to acquaint with five Times as many as theſe now publiſhed.

But ſtill with this Reſerve, That if good Reaſon be found for it, there may be an Alteration in the claſſing and connecting them, from what is now propoſed, upon an overly and leſs accurate View.

Wherefore it is propoſed for the next Five, That they be,

1*ſt*, on PSAL. lxv. 4. Containing the Duty, and Privilege of Believers; and Grace, as the Cauſe of both.

2*dly*, On PSAL. xxvii. 4. ſhewing, That Acceſs to God, and Views of the Lord's Beauty, is the great Deſire of ſerious Souls.

3*dly*, On PSAL. lxxiii. 28. repreſenting, That the beſt Courſe for toſſed and tempted Souls, is to draw near to God.

4*thly*, On PSAL. xcvii. 11. gives Account of the future Joy and Conſolation of upright Souls, whatever their preſent Diſcouragements or Afflictions may be.

5*thly*,

5*thly*, JOHN xi. 39, 40. Faith's Views of the Glory of God, the beſt Relief under the greateſt Diſcouragements.

THE Third Claſs: And of theſe,

THE *Firſt*, JOB xxiii. 3. Soul Deſires after God, and of this a further Account from CANT. iii. 1. accounting alſo for the Endeavours of deſerted Souls to find Chriſt, and that even theſe ſeeking, may ſometimes miſs him.

3*dly*, PSAL. 86. 17. Good Tokens from God ſhewn unto his People.

4*thly*, PSAL. xxv. 14. God's Familiarity with his People, in ſhewing them his Covenant and Secrets.

5*thly*, Chriſt found of ſeeking Souls, CANT. iii. 4.

Fourth Claſs: Where is handled,

Firſt, JOB xxii. 21. Acquaintance with God, the Way to Peace with him.

CANT. ii. 11, 12. All Diſcouragements of ſeeking Communion with Chriſt, are now taken out of the Way.

ISAI. iv. 5. Chriſt the Believer's Glory, and the Defence of that Glory.

ISAI. xli. 14. The Encouragement and Comfort of ſerious, but timorous Souls.

II. COR. iii. 18. The Views of Chriſt, in one Sermon: And

THEIR transforming Influence and Efficacy in another.

Fifth

Fifth Claſs contains Sermons upon

ROM. viii. 32. God's giving his Son, he higheſt Security, for giving his People ll other Things.

DEUT. v. 28. That a Heart-ſearching od often obſerves the Want of a ſound eart, under the faireſt and moſt ſpecious rofeſſions.

I. COR. xi. 28. The Neceſſity and uty of Self-Examination, in coming to he Lord's Table. And,

29. *Diſcerning the Lord's Body*, the Way o avoid unworthy Communicating, and ll the diſmal Conſequences thereof.

I. KINGS xix. 7. God proportions he Proviſions of his People to their Exi-encies.

Sixth Claſs: The Contents of it may e,

GEN. xxii. 14. The Saints Extremity od's Opportunity.

EXOD. xx. 24. God's promiſed Pre-ence in his Ordinances.

EZEK. xxxvii. 11, 12, 13. The Re-urrection of the Believer's Hopes.

I. JOHN iii. 23. Believing in Chriſt, he indiſpenſible Duty of all to whom the oſpel comes.

NUMB. xxiii. 9. The Peculiarity of od's *Iſrael*.

BUT theſe being enough for this time, o more needs be added.

SERMON

SERMON I.

The LORD's Feaſt:

OR, THE Entertainments of God's Houſe

Opened from

ISAIAH XXV. 6.

And in this Mountain ſhall the LORD of Hoſts make unto all People a Feaſt of fat Things, a Feaſt of Wines on the Lees, of fat Things full of Marrow, of Wines on the Lees well refined.

TO introduce you to theſe Words, we muſt look back to the Cloſe of the preceeding Chapter, where we have a Prophecy of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, his Victory and Conqueſt over his Enemies, and his *Glorious Reign* in *Mount Zion* and *Jeruſalem*, (that is, the New Teſtament Church in Old Teſtament Language) before, or in Preſence of *his Ancients*, his Miniſters and Servants, who are in his Court, what Courtiers are in the Courts

of Princes, Attendants and Servants, who are employed in ſubordinate Adminiſtrations, receive and execute his Commands, ſtand in his Preſence, and are Witneſſes of his Glory.

NOW, the Prophet being deeply affected with the Manifeſtation of the Lord's Glory, in puniſhing or chaſtiſing his own People, overthrowing his Enemies, eſtabliſhing his Throne, and reigning glorioufly; he cannot forbear to celebrate this in a Song, contained in the firſt five Verſes of this Chapter.

AFTER this Song is over, in the Words of our Text, and in the ſubſequent ſeven Verſes, he returns to a prophetical Deſcription of the Happineſs of the Subjects of Chriſt's Kingdom in the Goſpel-Day, under his Government.

OF this their Happineſs, the Spirit of God here, by the Prophet, condeſcends on three notable Inſtances.

(1.) THERE is a great Entertainment deſign'd for them, in this ſixth Verſe, which is our Text.

(2.) THERE are clear and full Diſcoveries of the Counſel of God, for their Salvation, deſign'd for them, with a Removal of all thoſe *Vails*, by which their Light into thoſe Things was formerly obſtructed, *viz.* 1. The *Vail*, or *Covering of Natural Darkneſs* on their Minds: And, 2. The *Vail of dark Shadows* giving but an *obſcure Diſcovery*, both are to be removed, *Verſe* 7. and accordingly now are ſo, as the New Teſtament plainly declares.

(3.) A more complete Victory over their Enemies, their *ſpiritual Enemies*, is promiſed, *Verſe* 8, 10, 11, 12. *Death is to be ſwallowed up in*

in Victory; and *Moab*, under which Name all their Enemies are couched: *Moab*, I ſay, is to be *troden down*.

IN the midſt of this laſt Branch of this Prophecy, there is interjected, *Verſe* 9. a Prophecy of the Joy that the Evidence of God's Mercy, Love and Faithfulneſs, in accompliſhing all thoſe Things, ſhould afford, after long Delays and many Obſtructions, to the Diſappointment and Confuſion of Enemies, who were upbraiding them with their Expectations, and their full Eſtabliſhment, over the Belly of all their Fears, in the Experience and Enjoyment of what their own Unbelief, and the Suggeſtions of Enemies would have had them, to the Diſcredit of the Promiſe of God, to deſpair of. Now, ſays the Prophet, in that Day the Church will triumph Time about, and on better Grounds. The Enemies Inſults were a Triumph before the Victory; but the Church will then ſpeak with them in the Gate, and anſwer all their Suggeſtions by plain convincing Proof. *And it ſhall be ſaid in that Day, Lo, this God is our God*, &c. But to return to the Text,

THIS ſixth Verſe which we have read, was, to the Church of old, a Prophecy, or Promiſe, under figurative Expreſſions, of that rich Proviſion of ſpiritual Mercies which the Lord deſign'd to prepare for, and entertain his People with, in Goſpel Times, in and by Goſpel Ordinances.

WHAT was to them a *Prophecy* and *Promiſe* of *good Things*, at a Diſtance, is to us, partly, a *Hiſtory* of what the *Goſpel-Church has long enjoyed* in *Goſpel-Inſtitutions*, and what is now ſtill in them provided for us, if we are the Children

of *Zion*; and partly they are a *Promiſe* to all the Lord's People, *now* more eſpecially, when they *attend* and *wait on the Lord*, in the *Inſtitutions of Worſhip*, *as you this Day do*; and that of *good Things ready prepared* for you, if you are ſuch, and *preſently* to be offered to, and beſtowed on you.

Here then, you ſee what Entertainment you are invited to, when you are called together to wait on the Lord this Day, in the Goſpel Ordinances of Worſhip; and more eſpecially this Ordinance of the Lord's Supper claims Relation to this Promiſe, as coming neareſt to the Similitude made Uſe of in the Text, not to mention other Reaſons which might be offered.

YOU cannot avoid owning, that here is an Account of a great Entertainment, and that it is very proper to hear of this now, when there is an Aſſembly gathered together to celebrate a Feaſt: But perhaps you may have ſome Doubt about your Concern in that Entertainment mentioned in the Text. Well, if it is ſo, we allow it reaſonable that you ſhould be ſatisfied on this Head; but this Day we have much Work on our Hand, and Time being very precious, we muſt therefore wave the uſual Method, and chuſe that which ſuits the Text, may beſt remove your Difficulties, and withal bring all home to your Conſciences, and the Deſign of this Meeting. Well then, to come preſently to the Matter, the Text ſuggeſts an Anſwer to ſome Queſtions, that you may want to be ſatisfied about.

HERE is Mention of an Entertainment, may you ſay: But we deſire to know,

I. Where

I. Where is it to be expected?
II. Is it certainly to be had there?
III. Who is the Provider of it?
IV. How is it prepared?
V. For whom is it deſign'd?
VI. What ſort of an Entertainment is it?
VII. What are the Materials that are provided.

Now, if we can inform you about theſe Things, I think you may, by that Time, have little elſe to deſire, but to ſtep forward, if you are among the Call'd, and eat chearfully, and be thankful. Well, the Text ſuggeſts Anſwers to each of thoſe.

I. WOULD ye know where this Entertainment is to be expected? The Text Anſwers, *It is on this Mountain.* If ſtill you ſay, On what Mountain? I anſwer, The Context anſwers, It is *Mount Zion*; that is mention'd in the laſt Verſe of the preceeding Chapter, to which this relates. But this Anſwer muſt be more particularly explain'd; becauſe it is the Key of the whole Text that will open the Way to all the reſt, if it is well explain'd. Now to clear this to you, obſerve ſeriouſly the few following Remarks.

1. IN general obſerve, That the moſt remarkable Events which of old befell the Church, as to its outward Condition, were Shadows of the ſpiritual Mercies deſign'd for the true Iſrael of God. Thus their Bondage in *Egypt*, Deliverance thence, Travels through the Wilderneſs, Introduction into *Canaan*, were deſign'd to lead unto a View of what ſpiritual Mercies the Lord deſign'd for his People. The Appli-

Application of thoſe Things in the New Teſtament clears this abundantly: Wherefore,

2. WHEN the Lord, of Old, did promiſe ſpiritual Mercies, which he deſign'd, in the Goſpel Times eſpecially, to beſtow, he promiſes them in Words ſuited unto thoſe Things they then were converſant with; and by which the Lord ſhadowed, and darkly pointed out to them thoſe ſpiritual Things, under that darker Diſpenſation; yet ſo as not to leave them without Hints, ſufficiently intimating that they were not to reſt in thoſe carnal Things, that were but Shadows of ſpiritual good Things to come, tho' the Generality of the *Iſraelites* look'd no further than the bare Letter and outward Shadow. But

3. TO come more cloſs, you muſt obſerve, That when the Lord brought his People out of *Egypt*, in their Way to the Promiſed Land, he brought them to *Mount Sinai*, that ſtands in the Midſt of a barren Wilderneſs, a Mount covered with Buſhes and Brambles, whence it had its Name. Here God appeared to them, cloath'd in ſuch manner, as might contribute to fix an Awe and Dread of his terrible Majeſty on their Hearts. He deſcends *in Fire, in Blackneſs and Darkneſs, with terrible Lightnings and Thunders, and the Sound of a Trumpet. And from his Mouth and his Right Hand proceeded a Fiery Law.* Mean while all the People ſtood trembling and quaking at the Foot of the Mountain, oblig'd to keep their Diſtance on Pain of preſent Death without Mercy, hearing the Voice of Words that fill'd them with Terror, and made even *Moſes* exceedingly fear and quake. This terrible Manner of giving the Law, and eſtabliſhing

Exod. 19. Heb. 12. 18, 19. Deut. 33. 2.

bliſhing the old Covenant, together with the Multitude of its Precepts, Severity of its Sanction, and punctual Execution of them, fill'd them with Dread, and brought them under a Spirit of Bondage. Now, this *Mount Sinai* repreſents the *Old Teſtament Church, and its State.* Gal. 4. 24, 25.

4. AFTER ſome Stay here, the Lord led his People forward to *Canaan*, and brought them to *Canaan, a Land flowing with Milk and Honey*, and brought them to the *Border of his Sanctuary*, and ſettled them at *Jeruſalem*, in *quiet Habitations.* And here, for the Place of his Worſhip he choſe *Mount Zion*, on it he ordered the Celebration of all that Worſhip that did ſerve to Typify, and hold out Chriſt as the Relief of Sinners, from the Curſe and Terrors of the *Fiery Law.* Here the Temple, by God's Appointment was built; here was the Ark, the Mercy-ſeat, the Sacrifices, all pointing out Chriſt the Lamb of God that takes away Sin. In a Word, hither the Tribes went up to the Teſtimony of *Iſrael*, to pay Thanks to God. Here were the Prieſts, the Prophets, the Thrones of Judgment; Shadows of Chriſt in his ſeveral Offices, for the Salvation of Sinners from Wrath. Wherefore, Pſal. 78. 54. Iſa. 33. 20.

5. THIS *Mount Zion*, which the Lord deſired for his Habitation, ſaying, *This is my Reſt for ever*; *Here will I dwell*, &c. was a Shadow of the Goſpel Church, in which the *Subſtance* of thoſe Things, whereof they had only faint Reſemblances in their Ordinances of Worſhip, is to be found. This is plainly taught in the New Teſtament, particularly in that iv. of the *Galatians*, and *Hebrews* xii. 18, 19. Pſal. 132. 13, 14.

18, 19. We are ſaid, under the New Teſta-
ment, to be come, not to *Mount Sinai*, which
he there repeats the Deſcription of; but to
*Mount Zion, to the heavenly or ſpiritual Jeruſa-
lem, that Blood of Sprinkling, and to Jeſus the
Mediator of the New Covenant*, &c. Well then,
in the Goſpel Church, and its ſpiritual Inſti-
tutions of Worſhip, the true *Mount Zion*, we
have the Subſtance of what they had only the
Shadow of. This leads me

6. To obſerve, That the Place of Goſpel
Ordinances is this *Mount Zion* ſpoken of in the
Text, to wit, the Goſpel Church: More e-
ſpecially the ſolemn Ordinances of publick
Worſhip are hereby intended, *Zion* being the
Place only alloted, by Divine Appointment, for
their Celebration. This is the *City of our So-
lemnities*, as *Zion* properly was to them of Old.
And upon this Account it is, that *God loves*
Pſal. 87. 2. *the Gates of* Zion, *more than all the Dwellings of*
Jacob.

7. You are to obſerve, That nothing elſe
can be meant here than this. For, (1.) This
only is that *Mount Zion* in which Chriſt Reigns
before his Ancients gloriouſly, as you heard
from the laſt Verſe of the preceeding Chapter,
to which this relates. (2.) This is plainly a
Prophecy of what the Church had not enjoy'd,
and of more eminent Enjoyments than they
had before: But they never had more, or ſo
much, as in *David* and *Solomon*'s Time, un-
leſs it be under the Goſpel. (3.) This is a
Feaſt for all People, not only *Jews*, but *Gen-
tiles*. Now this ſays, the Incloſure was to be
broke down, and all that Frame of Worſhip
ſuited to uphold it, and conſequently, all Pri-
vileges

vilege of that *Zion* where it was celebrate. (4.) This *Mount Zion* muſt be where it can be reach'd by all People; which can belong to no other particular Place, nor agree to any Thing elſe, ſave Goſpel Ordinances. (5.) The Explication given above from the Word, is enough, were there no more to clear it, that it is in *Mount Zion*, even the Mount of Goſpel Ordinances; and *more eſpecially this, ſolemn Ordinance of the Supper*; which God alway had and has ſtill a ſpecial Reſpect to; here, I ſay, it is that this Entertainment ſpoken of in the Text is prepared, here it is to hold.

8. As I hinted before, tho' I exclude no Goſpel Inſtitution, yet I conceive, this Day's Solemnity, the Feaſt of our Lord's Supper, may plead, and be allow'd a ſpecial Intereſt in the Promiſe, upon ſeveral Accounts. As (1.) In this, There is an Invitation to a Participation of thoſe ſame ſpiritual Mercies held forth in the Text. (2.) They are exhibit under the ſame Notion and View as a Feaſt. And (3.) The Deſign of their Exhibition under this Similitude in the Text, and thoſe Signs in this Sacrament, is one and the ſame to hold forth the Lord, as the Fountain of ſpiritual Strength, Nouriſhment and Conſolation. *Fat Things*, and *Wine*, are ſuited to all theſe Ends, and ſo is it in this Ordinance. (4.) Here, if any where elſe, the Lord allows his People Plenty, that may well be call'd a Feaſt; others might be nam'd, but this is enough. Well, now you have got an Anſwer to your Queſtion, *Where is this Feaſt to be?*

THIS *Mount Zion* is the Mount of Goſpel Ordinance, eſpecially publick Solemnities, and more eſpecially and particularly it is in this Ordinance of the *Lord's Supper.*

WELL, you are not come to *Sinai*, to the fiery Law, to Darkneſs, Thunders and Lightnings, and to the Voice of Words, which they who heard them once deſired to hear them no more: But this Day you are come unto *Mount Zion*, even that Mount which God has choſen, of which he ſaid, *This is my Reſt for ever, for I have deſired it:* Of this Mount *glorious Things are ſpoken*, Pſal. lxxxvii. 3. *It is the City of our Solemnity*, Iſa. xxxiii. 20. Out of which *the Law goes*, Iſa. ii. 3. Here are the *good Tidings of Peace proclaim'd*, Iſa. xl. 9. This is the Place where the Elect are *begotten again to a lively Hope*, 1 Pet. i. 3. of which it may be ſaid, that *this Man and that Man was born there, and the Higheſt ſhall eſtabliſh her*, Pſal. lxxxvii. 5, 6. Here it is that the *Redeemer comes to them that turn from Ungodlineſs in* Jacob, Iſa. lix. 20. *In* Zion *the Lord is great*, Pſal. xcix. 2. and out of it *the Lord ſhineth glorioufly*, Pſal. l. 2. Here *he places Salvation for Iſrael his Glory*, Iſa. xlvi. at the Cloſe, and *ſends his People Strength*, Pſal. xx. 2. *Salvation*, Pſal. xiv. 7. and *Bleſſings*, Pſal. cxxviii. 5. Even *all ſpiritual Bleſſings in Chriſt Jeſus.*

IN Goſpel Ordinances, eſpecially the Word and Sacraments, all theſe are communicate. Rev. 14. 1. On this Mount *Zion* ſtands the *Lamb*, who has prepared here an Entertainment this Day. Have ye not Reaſon to ſay, How awful is this Place! *This is none other but the Houſe of God,*

the

the Gate of Heaven! Bleſſed be the Lord, that has brought me hither. But

II. IF any of you move the Queſtion, *Will this Feaſt hold?* The Text anſwers, That on this *Mount ſhall* this Feaſt be made; fear not then, here *ſhall* be an Entertainment. And to ſatisfy you in this, only conſider the Import of this little Word *ſhall* in the Text, which ſays to you.

1. THIS is not a meer Surmiſe, a May be; but what is *purpoſed* and *determined*, and was long ago fixt in the Intention of him who purpoſes and none can diſannul it. *The Counſel of the Lord that ſhall ſtand, and the Thoughts of his Heart to all Generations.* Jer. 4. 28. Iſa. 46. 10.

2. NOR is it merely a Purpoſe kept ſecret in his own Breaſt; but it is a Purpoſe intimate, which he has allow'd, nay authoris'd his Servants in his Name to publiſh. Now, he is not wont to alter the Word once gone out of his Mouth. Pſal. 89. 34.

3. NOT only ſo, but it is a Promiſe, and this, in a ſort, put it out of his Power, without Unfaithfulneſs, to change or recede from it. His People may claim the Accompliſhment of his Word of Promiſe.

4. IT is a Promiſe confirm'd by many other Promiſes, of an alike Nature elſewhere recorded in the Word; where he records his Name he has promiſed to meet with his People and bleſs them; where there are two or three met in his Name, he is in the midſt of them. Where his Servants adminiſter his Ordinances he has promiſed to be with them to the End of the World. He has call'd us to this Occaſion, and

invites to take, eat, drink, open our Mouths wide, and he will fill them.

FINALLY, I may add, the Church has had it confirm'd now by a long Tract of Experience. But

III. IF you ſay, Who provides this Entertainment, and is here to cover this Table for us? The Text anſwers, *It is the Lord of Hoſts, Jehovah Sabaoth.* From whom elſe could it be expected?

1. TO whom does it belong to provide for a Family to make Entertainments in a Houſe? Is it not to the Maſter of the Family, him to whom the Houſe belongs? He is to provide for thoſe of his own Houſe, ſee 2 *Tim.* v. 8. Now, what the Lord will not allow of, nay blames, as hugely faulty, in a poor Worm, he will not be guilty of himſelf.

2. To whom does it belong to make great Entertainments, Royal Feaſts? Is it not to *Kings*?

3. WHO is able to Feaſt *all People*, ſave he who is the God of the whole Earth, who challenges all the Cattle on a Thouſand Hills as his, the Birds of the Air, the Fiſh of the Sea, nay what Heaven or Earth can afford; nay more, who is *God All-ſufficient*, who, if all the Creation cannot afford what is enough to anſwer his Purpoſe, and accompliſh his Promiſe, he can create vaſtly more.

4. TO whom does it belong to accompliſh the Promiſes but to *Jehovah*, the God that gives a Being to his Word and all Things elſe.

BUT, methinks. I hear ſome poor Soul ſurmiſing, 'Tis indeed every way worthy of him to make ſuch Entertainments, and it is huge

'huge Condeſcendance that we hear any 'Thing of it: But what means *his Sword on 'his Thigh?* why is he *Red in his Apparel?* 'why takes he to himſelf on a Feaſt Day this 'Name *Jehovah Sabbaoth, Lord of Hoſts?* This 'were proper in a Day of Battle; but on a 'Feaſt Day it begets Miſtruſt. Who can eat 'chearfully with a Sword over his Head? 'ſoft Raiment, a Sceptre of Peace, Garments 'of Salvation, and ſome Name denoting 'Bounty, Love, Mercy, Riches, would ſeem 'more ſuitable on this Occaſion.

I anſwer, All this is Miſtake flowing from Ignorance of the Reaſons of his aſſuming this Name on this Occaſion, which are ſufficient to remove all thoſe Fears. I offer a few: Know then,

1. THIS Feaſt is a Feaſt of Triumph over his and your Enemies; it is deſign'd to be a Commemoration of the Victory he has obtain'd, and a Pledge of your making, in due Time, through him, a full Conqueſt. Here he appears, if I may ſo ſpeak, in his Warrior's Dreſs, as the *Lord of Hoſts*, to mind you, that on this Mount he has trodden down *Moab*, and ſwallow'd up Death in Victory, and deſigns not to lay aſide his Weapons till the Work is finiſhed, and not one Enemy left to occaſion Fear, or hinder your chearful Uſe of what he provides for you. Be of good Chear then, he has overcome the World, overcome your Enemies.

2. YOU are to be entertain'd this Day, as one Part of this Royal Feaſt, with the Spoil of Enemies, Sin, Satan, and the World; you are call'd, as it were, to *eat the Fleſh of Kings,* Ezek. 39. 18, 19.

Princes,

Princes, and Great Ones. This we may allude to: You are call'd together, to ſatisfy your ſelf with a View of your Enemies Deſtruction, the Stroke that has fallen on them, and is yet to fall on them; he appears as the *Lord of Hoſts,* to let you know to whom you ſtand indebted for what is done, who brought home thoſe Spoils you now ſhare in, and by whom you are to expect the compleating of the Victory.

3. You muſt know that this is, as *David* ſpeaks, *Pſal.* xxiii. *A Table covered in Preſence of your Foes.* You have many On-lookers, Sin, Satan, and the World, who regrate your Proſperity; and if it were in their Power, would mar the Joy of this Day, and mingle your Wine with your Blood. Well, therefore does he appear as the *Lord of Hoſts,* to maintain the Solemnity of your Feaſt, and to ſecure you againſt the Fears of your Enemies, I mean, deſpondent Fears; and to aſſure you, that upIſa. 4. 5. on all the Glory there is a Defence; and that upon all the Aſſemblies in Mount *Zion,* he *will create a Cloud.*

4. All of you who are invited to this Feaſt, are liſted Souldiers engag'd in a Warfare, and he appears as the *Lord of Hoſts,* to let you know, that you are to fight under his Banner, and he is to muſter the Hoſt of the Battle, and means not to let you go alone; and to engage, and encourage, and ſtrengthen you, he has invited you to his Table. Well then you ſee, my Friends, the Eating at his Table is in effect a Military Oath, and imports an Engagement to fight under him, and follow where he leads the Way.

5. He

5. HE appears this Day as *Jehovah Sabbaoth* the *Lord of Hoſts*, to give you an Aſſurance, that the Promiſes of the Covenant ſhall be accompliſh'd, notwithſtanding all the Obſtructions that do or may ſeem to ly in the Way: He is *Jehovah* the faithful God, that gives a Being to his Promiſes. He is the Lord *of Hoſts*, to let you know that Enemies ſhall not be able to ſtand in the Way, or hinder him; for he is ſtrong that executes his Word, even the Lord of Hoſts, who will not fail, nor be diſcouraged, till he has brought forth Judgment unto Victory. Joel 2.11.

6. HE Aſſumes this Name, the Lord *of Hoſts*, to let you know, that you muſt not, this Day, like thoſe mention'd *Jude* xii. *Feed your ſelves without Fear*, the War is not over: But after this encouraging Repaſt, you muſt immediately prepare for the Battel.

NOW, you have heard who has prepared this Entertainment for you, it is the *Lord of Hoſts*, even our Lord Jeſus Chriſt the Captain of Salvation, who has trode the Wine Preſs alone, and is glorious in his Apparel died in the Blood of Enemies, and who has on his Veſture and Thigh a Name writ, *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*, who will reign till he has put all Enemies under his Feet. Iſai. 63.1.

IV. WHY is the *making* of this Feaſt aſcribed to him? Upon what Accounts is he ſaid *to make* this Feaſt? I anſwer, upon good, nay, the beſt Reaſon imaginable: For,

1. The firſt Project of it, bred, if I may ſo ſpeak, in his Breaſt. Herein is Love, not that we loved him, but he loved us, we durſt not have thought, far leſs durſt we, if it had not ſprung

ſprung of himſelf, propoſed ſuch Entertainments. The prodigal durſt not have mentioned the fatted Calf. Luke 15.

2. As he form'd the Deſign, it is all on his own Expence we had got that Portion of Goods that was ours by Creation Right, and ſpent them with riotous living: But lo here, out of his own ſovereign Grace, Mercy and Bounty, he has provided a Feaſt for our Entertainment.

3. HIS Wiſdom has the ordering the Diſpoſal of the whole Fare he has prepared, and he orders every Thing about it; what is every ones Portion who ſhall ſit, and who ſhall ſerve, ſee *Prov.* ix. 2. 3, *&c.*

4. HE has prepared the Houſe, the Palace wherein it is provided. It is he that has rear'd up the glorious Goſpel Church and Inſtitutions. Prov. 9.2. *Wiſdom has built her Houſe, and hewn her ſeven Pillars.*

5. HE has taken upon himſelf the principal Charge of the Inſpection of the Gueſts at this Feaſt, as you ſee *Mat.* xxii. 11. He it is that ſpies out the Man that wants the Wedding Garment.

6. HE it is that entertains the Gueſts, welcomes them, and invites them to eat of what he has prepared. *Eat, O Friends,* Cant. 5.1. *drink yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.*

Finally, HE abundantly bleſſes their Proviſion, and ſatisfies them to the full. Pſal.13.2. Upon all theſe, and other ſuch Accounts, it appears how juſtly he may be ſaid to *make* this Feaſt. But we muſt go on to another Queſtion.

V. Wh

V. Will you ſay, But for whom is this Entertainment prepared? I anſwer, the Text tells *'tis for all Nations*, for all People.

1. 'Tis not for a few ſpecial Favourites, a few Minions, to the ſecluding others; but 'tis *for all People*, the whole Church of Chriſt of whatever Size.

2. 'Tis not narrowly confin'd to *Iſrael* according to the Fleſh, the Seed of *Jacob*, one particular Nation, nay, but even for us Gentiles, who dwell in the utmoſt Ends of the Earth, even in the Iſlands of the Sea. Bleſſed be God for this, of old it was not ſo: But now it is for *all People*, for every Nation.

3. THIS Table is not covered for the Rich, for them that can repay him; but for the Poor, the Needy, and they eſpecially are invited. He will not be worſe himſelf than what he requires his to be, and to do. Luke 14. 14.

4. IN a Word, 'tis *for all People, every one* that needs, that will come, that will be at Peace with him, that will ſubmit and liſt himſelf, whatever they have been, even the worſt Prodigals, if ſtrong Neceſſity has but brought them to ſee their Need, bethink themſelves, and return; they are not ſecluded, but heartily welcome to eat of this noble Proviſion. Well then, hear! O hear! poor, needy, hungry, thirſty, ſtarving Souls in *Scotland*, in *Ceres*, you are call'd to a covered Table; none are ſecluded but curs'd *Moabites*, unreconcil'd Enemies, who are to be trodden down.

VI. If any of you ſay, But what Sort of an Entertainment is this? The Text anſwers, *it is a Feaſt*. This is its Nature more ſpecially conſidered. Well my Friends,

1. WHAT *the Lord of Hoſts* has prepared for you in the Goſpel, and this Day, in this Ordinance, is not an ordinary Meal, ſuch as his People have always had, nor is it a narrow Allowance, but it is a plentiful Entertainment, *a Feaſt.*

2. IT is a great Entertainment; *Feaſts* are wont to be ſuch; and indeed, if we compare it with what the Church of old had, it may well be call'd *a Feaſt.* They wanted not what was abſolutely neceſſary: But God has *provided ſome better Thing for us.* Tho' we are the younger Brother, yet *Benjamin* like, we have got the Double portion.

Heb. 6. 40.

(3.) THIS is a *Feaſt*, not only that may ſimply preſerve Life, but what may afford a *pleaſant* and *comfortable Life.* We may ſay with the Pſalmiſt, *Our Cup runneth over.* Chriſt came, that his People might have Life, and have it more abundantly.

Pſal. 23. 5. John 10. 10.

(4.) THIS is a *Feaſt*, which, as it wants none of the Excellencies of any Feaſt, ſo it has many, nowhere elſe to be found.

(1.) THIS is a *ſpiritual Feaſt*, tho' held out by Similitudes taken from outward and ſenſible Things: So our Lord tells us, when treating, in the like Expreſſions, of the ſame Matter. Away with carnal Thoughts then; it is *ſpiritual Food* you are this Day to expect.

John 6. 63.

(2.) IT is a *heavenly Feaſt*, the *Bread of God* which *cometh down from Heaven*, even he that *giveth Life to the World.* This is Angels Food, or rather more.

John 6. 32, 33.

(3.) IT is a *Feaſt incomparable*, for the Excellency, Variety, Suitableneſs, Plenty of the Pro-

Proviſions, and its long Continuance: But of theſe more anone.

(4.) IT is a *free Feaſt*: All is here *without Money, and without Price.* Here I might add many other general Excellencies of it. Of this you may take Plenty without Exceſs; 'tis ſafe Food, nay it is ſaving; the Table is full of Salvation. Iſai. 55.

(5.) I add, as to this *Day's Feaſt*, to which you are now invited in this Goſpel-Ordinance of the Supper of our Lord, a ſolemn Goſpel-Inſtitution, ſtamped with his Appointment and Warrant, nay Command. As to this, I ſay, we only crave Leave to add this one general Obſervation, Every Feaſt is a Solemnity; but this Day's *Feaſt* is appointed with a Reſpect to Three of the moſt ſolemn Occaſions, all concurring, that ever were.

(1.) Newly reconciled Friends are to feaſt together, in Sign of *Reconciliation*, and give mutual Aſſurances of firm Friendſhip. Compare 1 *Cor.* x. 16. with 2 *Cor.* v. we are to have Communion in the *Blood of Reconciliation.* This is a *Feaſt of Reconciliation*, ſolemnizing the happy Compoſition of the moſt fatal Quarrel ever fell out.

(2.) THIS is a *Marriage Feaſt*: Here the Eſpouſals of the King's Son to the Bride he has, in aſtoniſhing Condeſcendence, choſen, are ſolemnized.

(3.) THIS is the *Feaſt*, which we call by a ſpecial Name, *A Service.* When Heirs are eaſed of great Eſtates, there are wont then to be great Entertainments, which we call a *Service*, becauſe then they are ſerved Heirs to the Eſtate: Well, on this Occaſion the *Bride*, the

Lamb's Wife, is to be ſeazed and infeft, and preſented with a ſealed Right to her Lord's glorious Inheritance.

HOW great then muſt the Entertainment, the *Feaſt* be, that is prepared by the *Lord of Hoſts*, ſo great a *Perſon*, for ſolemnizing, at *once*, *Three* ſo *great Occaſions!* But to proceed.

VII. IF you further ask, What are the Materials provided for this *ſolemn Feaſt?* The Text anſwers, *Fat Things, fat Things full of Marrow, Wines on the Lees, Wines on the Lees well refined.* Now this tells you,

1. THAT there is here Proviſion for a *complete Feaſt*, whatever is neceſſary for Food. There is Meat, and there is Drink; *fat Things and Wines.*

2. EVERY Thing that's provided is good, nay the beſt in its Kind; *Fat Things full of Marrow, Wines well refined.*

3. THERE is Plenty of them, *Fat Things* and *Wines*, in the Plural Number: There is in our Lord's Houſe, *Bread enough, and to ſpare.*

4. THERE is here Variety, *Fat Things* of different Sorts, and Variety of *Wines.* To give you but a Taſte of the Riches of that Proviſion made for you in the Goſpel, know, that there is here indeed, what the *Rabbins* among the *Jews* fancifully report of the *Manna*, what will anſwer every one's Taſte and Need.

(1.) There is Preparation for quickening Appetite: Of this Sort are the Diſpenſations mentioned, *Hoſ.* v. 15. *Cant.* Chap. iv, v.

(2.) There

(2.) There is Milk for Babes, even the *ſincere Milk of the Word*, 1 Peter ii. 2. Hebr. v. 14.

(3.) There is Water, even the *Water of Life*, to cool and aſſwage Thirſt, *John* iv.

(4.) There is ſtrong Drink for him that is *ready to periſh*, and *Wine* for thoſe that are of a *heavy Heart*; of which they may drink, and remember *their Sorrows no more*, Prov. xxxi. 6.

(5.) There is Bread, the Staff of Life, nay the Bread of Life, that not only ſtrengthens, but gives Life.

(6.) There is ſtrong Meat for them, who, by reaſon of Uſe, have their Senſes exerciſed, *Hebr.* v. 14.

(7.) There are here Cordials, Delicacies for reviving of fainting weak ones, Cordials, *ſpiced Wines*, Cant. 8.

(8.) There are Fruits, Apples, Pomegranates: There is nothing wanting that's profitable or pleaſant.

5. WHAT is here provided, is of wonderful Virtue. Here is (1. that *Wine* that makes glad the Hearts of thoſe whom all the World could not chear. (2.) Here is that Meat that not only ſtrengthens, but gives Life. (3.) This Proviſion reſtores, revives and renews Youth; ſee *Pſal.* ciii. (4.) This Feaſt works Wonders, opens the Eyes of the Blind, makes the Deaf to hear, and lame Man to leap as an Hart. Again further, it makes them who ſhare of it, live for ever. In one Word to ſay all, (5.) This Feaſt *ſatisfies*, whereas ye have ſpent all your Labour for that *which does not ſatisfie*.

6. IN a Word, here in this Feaſt every Thing for Matter and Manner are the beſt, in the beſt Order and Seaſon, as becomes the State of the King. He that gives the very Beaſts every one *their Portion* in due Seaſon, will not do leſs for his *own* People in ſo ſolemn Occaſions: Every Thing here muſt ſuit the State of the King, and the Solemnity of the Occaſions.

Pſal. 107. 27.

VIII. IF after all this any of you ſay, What means all this? All that we have heard ſeems Parables: We would know in plain Terms, what we are to get or expect. To ſatisfie this, I ſhall condeſcend in plain Terms upon a few particular Diſhes of this Feaſt, and in the Choice I ſhall have a ſpecial Eye to this Ordinance which you are now to celebrate.

1. THEN, O believing Communicants, you may feed your Eyes with a lively View of the *moſt glorious, convincing; nay, aſtoniſhing Evidence* of the inconceiveable Tenderneſs of everlaſting Love, toward ſuch *inconſiderable Worms as you* juſtly reckon your ſelves. God told his People of old, that who touched them, touched the Apple of his Eye. But how hard was it for poor Sinners deeply impreſs'd with a Senſe of God's Holineſs, and their own Sinfulneſs, to underſtand how this can be, or believe it: Well, here you have an *Evidence that forces a Conviction.* Herein *is Love,* not that we loved *God,* but that *he loved us,* and *ſent his Son to be the Propitiation for our Sins. In this was manifeſted the Love of God,* as the preceeding Verſe ſpeaks. Here is an *Evidence* that puts the Matter beyond Diſ-

Zech. 2. 8.

1 John 4. 10.

pute,

pute, an *Evidence* beyond what could have been, or deſired, or expected. Some Hints were given of this of old. But here it is in a lively Repreſentation appointed of God to convey in a clear Impreſſion of the Glory of this pledge of Love, and of the Love appearing in it. Poor Believer, how does this reliſh? What, no Taſte in the Love of God? no Savour-in Bowels of inexpreſſibly tender Love, and that *manifeſted* in a light, *clear beyond the Brightneſs* of the *Sun at Noon-day*!

2. HERE you are to be entertain'd with *a Seal, an Evidence* of *Remiſſion of Sin.* Would you not oft have thought your ſelves happy, if you could but have ſeen that there was Forgiveneſs with God, and twice ſo, if you could have any, the leaſt Hint that yours were forgiven. *Bleſſed is the Man whoſe Tranſgreſſions are forgiven, whoſe Sins are covered.* Well, here you have an *Evidence of it.* Here you have a Draught of the Blood of Atonement, of that Sin-Offering God has choſen, and cannot but accept, nay, has accepted. This Cup *is the Blood ſhed for many for the Remiſſion of Sins. Drink ye all of it.* How does this taſte? is it not like new Wine going down ſweetly enough, to make the Lips of them that are aſleep to ſpeak? Pſal. 32. 1. Song 7. 9.

3. HERE you have a *Pledge*, a *foretaſte of your Reconciliation with God*, as *well as a lively Repreſentation of the Means whereby this Peace was brought about.* Here the God with whom you were at Variance, to whom you were Enemies in your Minds, covers a Table, invites you to his Houſe; and in ſtead of dropping a Crumb to ſuch Dogs, invites you to ſit down, allows you intimate Communion with himſelf,

ſelf, yea, and to ſee not meerly his Back-parts, but his Glory in the Face of Jeſus Chriſt; in Reſpect of which *Moſes*'s Diſcovery and Sight of the Glory of God, may almoſt be ſaid to have no Glory. And mean while he lays not *his Hand on you* in a Way of Wrath, he deals not with you, he *pleads not with you by his ſtrong Power*! No, but he will put Strength in you. You might have expected to meet him as a Bear robb'd of her Whelps: But here he *meets* you as *a Man* does his Friend, his *Intimate*. Here is ſomewhat more noble and entertaining than the fatted Calf, aud all the Muſick Earth can elſewhere afford. Is not this, my Friends, a ſweet Entertainment?

Exod. 24. 11.

Job 23. 6.

4. SURVEY Chriſt's Goods, read over his Teſtament, enquire into all the unſearchable Riches of Chriſt, taſte all the Fruits of the Spirit. If there is any Reliſh in theſe Things, all theſe are ſet before you, exhibit to you in *a ſeal'd Right. This Cup is the new Teſtament, ſeal'd, confirm'd, ratifyed in his Blood.* Are you not *bid take it*? Have you no Senſes, or have you ſo loſt your Senſes, that you can reliſh nothing here?

5. POOR Souls, it may be ſome of you think, and ſometimes ſay, *The Things we need to compleat our Happineſs, the Expence of Grace that will be neceſſary to carry ſuch weak and empty Creatures through all the Duties, Temptations and Trials of our Way, is ſo great; the Crown, the Weight of Glory, and all that Honour that's deſign'd for the Heirs of Glory, ſo far ſurpaſſes our mean Condition, that it looks like Preſumption, once to think of it, or hope for it: Ah! how we faint and fear that we ſhall be refuſed, if we ſeek it;*

check'd

check'd as preſumptuous, if we offer to lay Claim to it. I know ſome have been ſo exerciſed; and it is a wonder there are not more ſo. Well, how will it pleaſe you, if God ſhall this Day give you a *Pledge in Hand*, that will *ſecure you*, nay, more in Hand *than all that is behind? Oh had we this, we would need no more, we always ſaw, ſince God opened our Eyes, that there was enough in the Covenant, to make us as happy as Heart could wiſh, but it ſtill ſtuck here! But will he give this and that, and the other Thing to us?* Well my Friends, *God has not ſpared his only Son for you, but delivered him up to the Death, and has offered him to you.* Here *he is again to give him to you, and ſeal the Gift.* Now tell me, after God has gone thus far, can he ſtop at any Thing that remains? *How ſhall he not with him freely give us all Things?* Are Grace, or Glory, or Heaven, what you need or can name, in more Eſteem with God than his Son? Will he *beſtow him, and hold theſe back*? Will he give him thus to and for you, *while yet Enemies*, and *when ye are reconcil'd* Friends, *Heirs*, Children; will he ſtick at Neceſſaries, Food and Raiment, Protection, or a Share in his Eſtate? Who dare entertain ſuch a Thought? How does this Diſh Reliſh! this is not like the White of an Egg! this is not unſavoury Meat that cannot be eaten without Salt.

6. To add no more here, you have the *Lamb of God*, that on the Faith of which the Church of God lived for 4000 Years. Here is the Accompliſhment of the great *Mother Promiſe* that was longeſt delay'd, and run moſt Hazards as to its Accompliſhment, the Performance of

which was that whereon all the Church's Hopes lean'd, its Bleſſedneſs depended; and of this you have the Complement ſet before you, which is enough to liberate the Faithfulneſs of God from any Suſpicion for ever, and oblige to give intire Credit to all the Promiſes, tho' at the greateſt Diſtance, whatever ſeeming Improbabilities or real Difficulties lie in the Way of their Accompliſhment.

MANY other Things of the like Nature might be added, but this is ſufficient for a Taſte. Now I hope we have ſpoke plainly, and uſed no Parable. As to the

Improvement.

I Think there will be no great Need of inſiſting here. Time is very precious; much of it is ſpent.

I ſhall only ask, in the Lord's Name, this great Aſſembly one Queſtion, Are ye for us, or for our Adverſaries? Are ye on the Lord's Side, or againſt him? I know by Nature ye are all Enemies: But are ye reconciled to him, to his Laws, his Providence and his Inſtitutions? Are ye engaged againſt Sin, fighting againſt Sin, all Sin, ſecret Sins, beloved Sins? Maintain ye a cloſs and conſtant War againſt theſe? Or do ye allow any of them to live in Peace with you? Can ye lay aſide your Weapons, while theſe are alive? If ſo, then ye are among the Enemies the *Moabites*; this Feaſt is not deſigned for you: But if you fight under the Banner of *Jehovah-Sabaoth*, the Lord of Hoſts, againſt

againſt all theſe Sins that war againſt the Soul, and can admit neither Peace nor Truce with any of them; then I ſay,

1. Whatever you are, of whatever Condition, Station, Relation, whatever you have heretofore been, *for you* is this Feaſt this Day prepared. What the Lord in the Text promiſed, is *this Day prepared* in this Goſpel-Solemnity; the Oxen and Fatlings are killed, the Wines are mingled, the Table is covered, and we are ſent to call you to the Feaſt.

2. We cannot but congratulate your Happineſs: Hail, ye Bleſſed of the Lord! Hail, People greatly favoured! whom the Lord of Hoſts thinks fit to honour, ſo as to prepare you for ſo noble a Feaſt, and it for you, and to ſet you at his Table.

3. For the Lord's Sake, think not light of this Honour that is this Day done you: It is not a ſmall Matter. Is it a ſmall Matter with you to ſit at the Table of the Lord?

4. Open your Mouths wide. If the Edge of your Appetite is not ſharp, if your Deſires are not quick, cry to him who can help you: *The Preparation of the Heart is from the Lord.*

5. For the Lord's Sake mind where you are, when you approach his Table, and beware of any unbecoming Carriage.

6. Before ye ſtep forward, look well that you be indeed among thoſe who have a Right to be there. A Miſtake in this may be of dangerous Conſequence. As for you of this Congregation, I have offered you Marks whereby you may try it; and for Strangers, I doubt not but by their reſpective Miniſters they are plentifully ſupplied. If any *Moabites* ſhall

crowd in, as I do not want my Fears that many may, here they may expect to be troden down.

7. As for such of you whom the Lord our God has called, there remains no more at present, but to invite you, and welcome you in our Lord's Name. *Come, eat, O Friends, drink, yea drink abundantly, O Beloved: Come, eat that which is good, and let your Soul delight it self in Fatness.* He that has made this Provision, shall satisfie you, poor Souls, with Bread, and abundantly bless your Provision.

SER-

SERMON II.

CHRIST Crucified:
OR,
The Wiſdom and Power of GOD in him, rendring the Goſpel-Call effectual.

I. COR. i. 23.

But we preach Chriſt crucified, unto the Jews a Stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks Fooliſhneſs.

Verſe 24. *But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Chriſt* (viz. Crucified) *the Power of God, and the Wiſdom of God.*

WE are met this Day to prepare for the Celebration of the Memorial of Chriſt's Crucifixion or Death: Now I know not what can be more ſuitable to this End, than to endeavour to lead you into right Thoughts of the Nature, Excellency and Importance of this Death, which you are

Introduction.

are ſolemnly to commemorate: And there is the more Need of this, that many now begin to be weary of this Part of the Goſpel, and can ſcarce know, according to their Models of Religion, what Room to aſſign it. The Subject is large, our Time precious; we ſhall but glean, endeavouring rather to inſiſt on what muſt not be omitted, than what may be ſaid.

The Apoſtle in this Digreſſion, which begins *Verſe* 17. and is continued to the Beginning of Chapter iii. tells us what is the moſt effectual Way of ſaving Sinners: And in this Diſcourſe,

1. He tells the Vanity of all Mens Contrivances for this End, *Verſ.* 19, 20, 21.

2. He tells us what Means God had contrived, and that is the Goſpel, *Verſ.* 18, 21.

3. He tells us what is the principal Means of *Salvation* held forth in the Goſpel, and that is *Chriſt crucified*, *Verſ.* 17, 18, 23, 24.

4. He ſhews how this Mean is to be uſed and applied, and that is, in and by the Goſpel Diſpenſation: *Chriſt crucified* is to be held forth in the Way of God's Appointment, *Verſ.* 17, 21.

5. He repreſents what Entertainment it met with, when this was propoſed, *Verſ.* 25. *Jews* and *Greeks* rejected this Mean of Salvation.

The Text divided, and opened.

6. In the Words of our Text, *Verſ.* 24. he aſſerts the Excellency of this Mean, this Way of Salvation, notwithſtanding all the Contempt caſt on it.

In this Verſe ſhortly we may notice thoſe four Things.

1. We

I. We have the Subject of the Apoſtle's Diſcourſe; 'tis *Chriſt*, and that as *crucified*: This is plain from the preceeding Verſe, and the whole Context. *Chriſt crucified*, in the Apoſtle's Judgment, was the great Subject of the Goſpel, which is the *Preaching of the Croſs*, *Verſ.* 18. It was *That* he was principally concerned to hold forth to his Hearers, and have them acquainted with, *Chap.* ii. *Verſ.* 2. and in Compariſon of this, he counted all *Loſs*. It ſeems our Apoſtle was of a different Mind from many now-a-days, both at home and abroad, who think that Men may be very good Chriſtians, and effectually reach Salvation, tho' they know little, or perhaps nothing of Chriſt's Death: But this is not the only Inſtance wherein our Apoſtle has happened to be of a different Mind from *Rabbi's* of old, and of late, for which he has met with ſharp enough Cenſures, that, I fear, will one Day bring the Cenſurers under Correction. Philip. 3. 10.

II. We have the Excellency of this, in order to the Salvation of *Sinners*, which is the End now in View, as the whole Context clears beyond Exception: 'Tis the Power of God, the powerful Mean by which God puts forth his *Power*, to the Salvation of them that believe; 'tis the *Wiſdom of God*; 'tis the *wiſe Contrivance of God*, whereby God deſigned, and really does manifeſt his Wiſdom and Power in the Salvation of the Church. Rom. 1. 16. Acts 4. 27, 28.

III. We have the Perſons to whom it is ſo; 'tis them that are *effectually called*, whether *Jews* or *Greeks*: To *them it was*; they found it powerful; they approved it as the Wiſdom of God, and the Power of God.

IV. We

IV. We have the Certainty and Firmneſs of this Doctrine, notwithſtanding of the contrary Opinion of *Jews* and *Greeks*: This is inſinuate in the Adverſative, *But*, in the Beginning of the Verſe, denoting the Oppoſition of this to their Judgment, mentioned *Verſ.* 23.

Now from the Words we offer this Doctrine.

Doctrine. *Chriſt crucified, held out in the Goſpel-Diſpenſation, is the powerful Mean whereby God, in his Wiſdom, effectually ſaves all them that are called.*

The Doctrine needs no Texts to prove it; it is plain in the Words; the Context is full of it; the whole Scriptures are ſo, as we ſhall ſee afterwards. In ſpeaking to it, we ſhall

Method of diſcourſing. I. Offer ſome plain Remarks about *Chriſt crucified.*

II. Offer ſome Explication of their Character, for whom he was ſo.

III. Clear and illuſtrate the Doctrine by ſome Inſtances of the Power of the Death, the Crucifixion of Chriſt.

IV. We ſhall make ſome Improvement ſuitable to the Occaſion.

1. General Head. JESUS is CHRIST. Acts 4. 27. I. We ſhall offer ſome Remarks about *Chriſt crucified:* And, 1. Our Lord was indeed the *Chriſt of God*, the Meſſiah, the Anointed; him had God ſolemnly ſet apart, and fully furniſhed to be the *Saviour of Sinners*. He is the *Holy Child Jeſus* whom thou haſt anointed, ſays the joyful Congregation in their Song of Praiſe. Compare *Matthew* i. 21. with *Luke* i. 74.

2. Chriſt was crucified by the World. Acts 4. 27. 2. The *Chriſt* of God, whom he ordained to *ſave the World*, was in the World, and by the

the World *crucified*, put to Death. *Jews* and *Gentiles*, Rulers and People, Church and State, Elect and Reprobate, a full Repreſentation of the World concurred to crucifie the Saviour of the World. This is a common, but a very ſtrange Truth. *Be aſtoniſhed, O ye Heavens*, at the monſtruous Ingratitude of the World below! What a ſtrange Thing alſo is it, that he who was ordained, anointed to ſave the World, ſhould die! the Prince of Life loſe his Life! the Saviour be deſtroyed, as it were! But this is not all: For, Acts 4. 27.

3. The *Chriſt* of God was ſent into the World by God, to die, to be *Chriſt crucified*. God ſpared him not; he delivered him up: He gave his Enemies Power againſt him, as our Lord inſinuates to *Pilate*. He bid the Sword *awake againſt him*; he *put him to Grief*, and *bruiſed him*. Strange! the Chriſt of God, by the determinate Counſel of God, crucified! What muſt the Matter be? Which leads me to remark, 3. Chriſt was crucified by, and according to God's Appointment. Rom. 8 32. Joh. 19. 11. Zech. 13. 7. Iſai. 53. 10. Acts 4. 28.

4. The *Chriſt* of God was not crucified for any Sin of his own: He was *holy, harmleſs, undefiled, ſeparate from Sinners*. He needed no Atonement for his own Sins. He was cut off, *not for himſelf*: His Enemies could find no *Fault with him*: Heaven proclaims him innocent. Accurſed therefore are the Notions that now ſpread amongſt us, That Chriſt's Will was ſinful; That there were Rebellions in his lower Faculties, *&c.* and the Apologies for this are no better. 4. Not for his own Sin. Heb 7. 26, 27. Dan. 9. 26.

5. Chriſt was *crucified*, in the ſtead of *Sinners*, for *our Sins*; for *he was cut off from the Land of the Living*: *For the Tranſgreſſion of my People was* but for; and in Sinners ſtead. Iſai. 53. 8.

he ſtricken; that is, not merely for our Good, as *Socinians* ſpeak: Nor was it *only* or principally to leave us an Example of ſuffering; but it was in our Stead, in our Place. This *Socinians*, and they who of old and of late fall in with them, oppoſe: And I wiſh that ſome amongſt our ſelves, with their new and uſeleſs Diſputes about the Senſe wherein Chriſt bore our Perſons, had not contributed too much to the darkning this glorious Truth, whereon all the Power of Chriſt's Death toward our Salvation hangs. I ſhall tell you what the Scripture ſays in this Matter plainly.

This opened in 7 Particulars.

CHRIST Surety for Sinners.

(1.) Chriſt was made, or admitted by God, to be our *Surety*, *Heb.* vii. 22. whereas we only were at firſt bound by and to the Law: He was now allowed to come in our Bond, and was made *under the Law*, *Gal.* iv. 5. whereby he became liable to anſwer all that the Law required of us: And to this he willingly agreed. Tho' he was in the Form of God, he made *himſelf of no Reputation*, took the Form of a Servant, and *became obedient to Death, even the Death of the Croſs*, Philip. ii. 6, 7, 8. Pſal. xl. 6, 7, 8.

Their Sins were charged on him.

(2.) Our Sins were charged on him; *God laid on him the Iniquity of us all*, Iſai. liii. 6. and he *bare them*, even our Sins, *Verſ.* 11.

He was puniſhed for them,

(3.) He was puniſhed for thoſe Sins, he was cut off from the Land of the Living, *Iſai.* liii. 8. not for himſelf, *Dan.* ix. 26. but for the Tranſgreſſion *of my People was he ſmitten*, Iſai. liii. 8.

with the Curſe of the Law.

(4.) The Puniſhment he ſuffered for theſe Sins was the Puniſhment threatned by the Law. *He was made a Curſe for us, to deliver*

liver us, from the Curſe of the Law, Galat. iii. 13.

That they might not be puniſhed.

(5.) His Deſign in bearing this Puniſhment was, that we might be delivered from the Curſe, as we ſee in the Words laſt quoted.

His Death reckoned theirs.

(6.) His Death is reckoned ours, that is, as undergone and ſuffered for us, and whereof the Benefit ſhould accrue to us, *If one died for all, then are all dead*, 2 Cor v. 14, 15. We are crucified with him, buried with him.

and pleadable for their Diſcharge.

(7.) *His Death* and *Puniſhment*, we are inſtructed to plead as *Payment, or Satisfaction*, when we are accuſed, charged and call'd to Account; and we are to plead his *Reſurrection* as our *Diſcharge*, as to all that can be required of us, in Order to our Juſtification, ſee *Rom.* viii. 34, 35.

Now this much for the firſt general Head propoſed.

II. General Head, Chriſt the Power of God.

II. Let us ſee who they are for whom Chriſt was crucified, and to whom he is the Power of God. This is a Diſpute. I ſhall give you ſome plain Scripture Characters of the Perſons.

to them who were given to him.

1. They are ſuch as were given to him of the Father. His Power is *to give Life to as* many as *are given him*, John xvii. 2. who *ſhall all*, in Time, *come to him*, and *none of them be loſt*, John vi. 37, 39.

To them that are call'd.

2. They are in the Text, thoſe who are *call'd*, not meerly externally, as thoſe mention'd in the Verſe before, but internally and effectually, in Oppoſition to them, and who are the ſame with the Choſen, *ver.* 26, 27. compared with the Text.

To them, to whom he is given.

3. They are ſuch to whom Chriſt is in Time given, and with him all Things, *Rom.* viii.

32. Here is the Order, Christ, (1.) is *delivered for us.* (2.) *Given to us.* (3.) *All Things with him.*

And who receive him.

4. They are such as *believe on him, receive* him, to them it is the Gospel is the *Power of God*, Rom. i. 16.

Finally, I might tell you, they are God's People, *Isai* 53, 8. Christ's Sheep, *John* x. 11. The Church of God, *&c.* but I pass these.

III. General Head, Christ's Death the Power of God.

III. I shall now show in some Instances, that *Christ crucify'd*, or the *Death of Christ* is the *Power*, and *the Wisdom of God*, to *their Salvation.*

1. To Converts.

I, *Christ's Death*, held forth in the Gospel, is the *Power* of God, the powerful Mean, whereby Sinners are call'd or converted. What is the great Thing that prevails on Sinners to turn to God? Why, it is the Offer of a slain Saviour, *Acts* 2. 42. Three thousand are converted! Well, what was it that prevail'd on them? look the Chapter; 'tis a Sermon about Christ crucified. Who converted most to God? I believe never any did convert so many as our Apostle. Well, what Means used he? It was the preaching of the Cross, as he tells us in this Context.

2. To Justification.

II. *Christ crucified* is the Power of God to Justification. This our Apostle dwells upon in the first five Chapters of the Epistle to the *Romans*, and frequently elsewhere. The Case is this, Guilty Man is call'd to Account, accus'd for his Sins before God. What Plea shall he make, where shall there an Answer be got that will *effectually* clear him? If Judgment is given against him, he is undone.

The Wisdom of Men, Heathens and Christians have laboured to find Pleas, and to this Day

Day new Defences are ſtill ſought. (1.) Some are for pleading not guilty, denying. (2.) Others for excuſing, extenuating Faults, like *Adam*. (3.) Some for making Amends by Vows to do better in Time coming. (4.) Some promiſe to do more than's requir'd. (5.) Some pretend to expiate their Sin with their Tears. (6.) Some are for Pennances. (7.) Some run to Sacrifices of Beaſts. (8.) Others, to barbarous human Sacrifices. (9.) Others, to the ſacrificing their own Children. (10.) And ſome fearing all this not enough, would be content to go to Impoſſibilities, *Micah* vi. 6. (11.) Some place much in Acts of Charity. (12.) Others are for Monaſtick Vows, Retirement and Mortification, as they falſly call it, or to uſe the modiſh Word, *doing Pennance*. (13.) Some for truſting to their own Faith. (14.) Others to their ſincere Obedience, ſuch as they can give. And in Effect here they all ſtand. We owe Pounds, and we will pay Pennies. You ſee there are two Advantages. (1.) God ſhall not have it to ſay, that he freely *forgave them all*. (2.) They may ſay they have *paid ſome, tho' not what they ought*, yet *what they could*, and it were cruelty to exact more. *Finally*, Some fearing all this not enough, run to a Purgatory, or in the new Language, A State of Purification. Look how hard Man's Wiſdom is put to it, and yet not one of all, nor all theſe together, have *Power* to juſtify and bring us off.

Many pleas for Sinners.

The Wiſdom of God by the Goſpel *reveals* the *Righteouſneſs of God*, Rom. i. 17. If a Sinner that believes is charg'd, threatned with Condemnation for Sin, it bids him plead, *Chriſt*

but none of them valid or powerful, to ſave

This *Chriſt is dead* for us.

Chriſt has died for Sin, that is, Has ſatisfy'd, paid; that *he is riſen*, that is, Has obtain'd a Diſcharge, and is in Heaven to make it good, *Rom.* viii. 34. This will powerfully bring us off; no other Plea will; they are weak and fooliſh.

III. Death of Chriſt the Power of God to Sanctification.

III. *Chriſt's Death* is the *Power* of God to Sanctification. This muſt be cleared in an Inſtance or two, eſpecially as to Mortification.

1. This illuſtrate as to *Mortification* of Sin.

(1.) *Chriſt's Death* is a *Satisfaction* for Sin, for the Guilt of all their Sins, that are Partakers of it, and hereby Sin loſes its Claim to their Service. 'Tis the *Power of God* to *diſable* the Foundation of Sin's Dominion. Sin has no Right that prejudges God's, but Sin and Satan both have a ſort of lawful Dominion over us by our own Conſent, according to the Rule, *Rom.* vi. 16. but aſſoon as we are Partakers of Chriſt's Sufferings and Death, *Phil.* iii. 10. and ſo Dead with him, *Rom.* vi. 4, 5. 2 *Cor.* v, 14. who died for Sins, if Sin pretend to reign and ſay, We have yielded *our ſelves Servants to obey it*, we may now anſwer, *We are dead*, 2 Cor. v. 14. and ſo are no longer bound; for the Law binds a Man no longer than he lives, *Rom.* vii. 1. Again, our Conſent is declar'd null, our Surety has ſuffered for it among the reſt of our Sins, and ſo it is dead, binds no more. *Finally*, Sin, thou art condemned as a Traitor, when we were, or our Surety was condemned for our ſubmitting to thee, Judgment was thereby given againſt thee; our old Man is crucify'd with Chriſt, *Rom.* vi. 6. no Service is due to a dead Maſter, one legally dead. Thus we ſee the Meaning of, *Rom.* vi. 7. *He that is dead* is *freed*, or as the *Greek* has it, *juſtified*

Its *Legal* Power for the Deſtruction of Sin.

'Tis the only *valid Plea* againſt Sin's pretended Right to our Service.

ſtified from Sin. He is powerfully ſecured againſt any Right that Sin claim'd to his Service.

(2.) *Chriſt's Death*, as the Price of our Redemption from the Power of Sin, has *powerfully* purchaſed, that is, effectually, or really merited the Communication of the holy Spirit, who actually breaks the Power of Sin, by planting, actuating, ſupporting, ſtrengthening, reviving the oppoſite Principle of Grace, the Law of the Spirit of Life in Chriſt Jeſus, whereby we are freed from the Law of Sin, and Sin is mortify'd, *Rom.* viii. 2, 13. Now, Chriſt's Death, as a Price, purchaſed this, *Gal.* iii. 13, 14. and *through him 'tis* ſhed on us abundantly, *Tit.* iii. 6. *Chriſt crucify'd is the Power of God in a meritorious and real Senſe*, to our Salvation from the Power of Sin.

2. Meritorious power. It is the Price that purchaſed the Spirit. *Efficient* Cauſe of Mortification.

(3.) Chriſt's Death, as an Atonement, ſecures the Acceptance of our Services, and ſo removes Diſcouragements, and affords the moſt effectual Arguments to enforce Holineſs. Our Labour is not in vain *in the Lord*, 1 *Cor.* xv. 58. but acceptable *through* him, 1 *Pet.* ii. 5. ſee 2 *Cor.* v. 14. 15. Thus 'tis morally the Power of God to Sanctification.

3. Its *Moral* or ſuaſory Power removes Diſcouragements, affords Arguments to excite to the Duty of Mortification.

(4.) *Chriſt's Death*, as held forth in the Goſpel, is the Mean made uſe of to make us holy, and ſo it, *inſtrumentally, as it were*, is the *Power* of God to Sanctification, 2 *Cor.* iii. 18. 'Tis a principal Part of that Glory that changes us when we ſee it: We might alledge many other Inſtances of its Influence in Sanctification, as the Pattern of the Deſtruction of the old Man, *Rom.* vi. 4, 5, 6. and the like. No Wonder Souls that deſire to be

4. Its *Inſtrumental Power*. The Goſpel Repreſentation of Chriſt's Death, the principal Channel of ſanctifying Influences.

be holy join with the Apoſtle's Deſire, *Philip.* iii. 10.

IV. Chriſt's Death the *Power of* God to Conſolation.

IV. Chriſt crucify'd, or his Death, is the *Power of God* to our Conſolation, being the great Pledge of God's Love to us. God commended his Love to us, in that, while we were yet Sinners, Chriſt died for us, *Rom.* v. 8. and this will bear much, ſee the Context, *ver.* vi.——12. This is the Spring of Conſolation.

5. It is a powerful Pledge of the Accompliſhment of Promiſe.

V. Chriſt's Death is the Power of God, to aſſure us of all the other Bleſſings of the Covenant. 'Tis the Pledge that makes us ſure that all the reſt ſhall be given in their Seaſon, Direction, Strength, Support, Proviſion, Protection, Light, Life, Love. ſee *Rom.* viii. 32.

VI. Powerfully ſecures from Danger, and procures Acceptance in our Approaches to the Holieſt.

VI. Chriſt crucify'd is the Power of God to ſecure our Acceptance, and obtain us ſafe Acceſs to the Holieſt, *Heb.* x. 19. We are ſafe, having the Lamb ſlain betwixt us and Hazard. He has *born the Iniquity of our holy Things*, and we have *Acceſs, i. e.* ſafe Acceſs, *into the Holieſt by his Blood.*

VII. Powerfully delivers from Satan.

VII. Chriſt's Death is the Power of God, to the Overthrow of Satan: *By Death, he deſtroy'd him that had the Power of Death, that is the Devil*, Heb. ii. 14. This may be underſtood by what was ſaid about Sanctification; Chriſt pays the Debt, and ſo, (1.) Satan the Jaylor loſes Right to detain us in Priſon. (2.) We have a Right to crave Power to free us from the wrongous Detainer.

VIII. It Powerfully unſtings Death.

VIII. Chriſt's Death powerfully delivers from the Sting of Death, and that is, the Guilt of ſin. This has been clear'd before, when we ſpoke of Juſtification, *Heb.* ii. 15.

IX. CHRIST's

IX. CHRIST's Death is the Meritorious Price of our Inheritance; *he died, that we might receive the Promise of eternal Inheritance.* Heb. ix. 15. IX. Purchaseth the Inheritance.

X. CHRIST's Death *confirms the Testament,* and so secures all Grace and Glory to us, *Heb.* ix. 16, 17. X. Confirms the Covenant.

USE.

WE might speak further of its Power in crucifying the World, and the like: But we pass these, and come to the Application. Now, from what has been said, we may,

Doctrinal Inferences.

I. For Information, learn,

1. The manifold Wisdom of God, that by a Mean, so unlikely and foolish in Men's Apprehensions, brings about so many glorious Effects; this is what the Angels look into, and the Redeem'd round the Throne fix their Eyes on, the *Lamb that was slain.* Again we may learn,

2. That the Doctrine of Christ crucify'd and its Power, is a great, yea the principal part, the Glory of the Mystery of the Gospel, of the Christian Religion: All Models of Religion that shorten its Power, cramp it into narrow Bounds, pretend Zeal for what they will, misrepresent the Christian Religion, nay miss it wholly; for all the Power of our Religion arises from the Room that the powerful Death of Christ has in it: And therefore, the *Jesuits* in the *Indies* who conceal it, the *Socinians*, *Quakers*, Modern *Mysticks* who leave little Room for the Power of the Death of Christ, if not as an Example, or a notable Act of Obedience, in a difficult Duty, teach not the Gospel.

3. The more directly and evidently any Goſpel Ordinance repreſents or ſets forth Chriſt as crucified, or Chriſt in his Death, the more glorious, uſeful, and valuable it is. How great then is the Glory of this Ordinance ye are now preparing for? How is he evidently ſet forth as crucify'd, in expreſs Words of Revelation, and Signs of his own Appointment?

4. We may learn, that it is a great Privilege to have thoſe Means whereby Chriſt is thus ſet forth evidently in his Death; for theſe are the Channels whereby all this *ſaving Power* is convey'd to them that are call'd. There is no Experience of this Power, but by *Faith, it is by Faith we are ſaved*, Eph. ii. 8. And where there is no Divine Command for a Warrant, no Inſtitution to lay Streſs on, no Promiſe to grip to, but a, *Who hath requir'd this?* ſtaring us in the Face, there is no place for Faith. 'Tis curſed Doctrine many are now drinking in, That every Mean that we may fancy uſeful for this or that End, *ex. gr.* mortifying Sin, *&c.* may be us'd, this will bring in Crucifixes, Pennances, and I know not what, yea all the *Pagan* Rites, this is a Shoe for any Foot: But, bleſſed be God, we have the Means of God's own Inſtitution, that are the Channels of this Power, the Miniſtration, the Spirit applying it, and, *of theſe we are not aſham'd.*

Rom. 1. 16.

5. We may learn, that our Religion is an experimental Religion; 'tis a Diſcovery of a ſaving Remedy to periſhing Sinners, a Remedy that's all Power, and works many Effects that may be, nay, that muſt be felt. Well then, if ye have no Experience of the Power of the Death of Chriſt to thoſe Ends mentioned, ye

are

are no Chriſtians. Notions of Truth make no Man ſuch, 'tis Experience of the Power of God, and Sight, Conviction of the Wiſdom of God herein, that does. *The Kingdom of God is not in Word, but in Power.*

II. For Trial.

Is Chriſt the Power of God, and the Wiſdom of God, to them *that are call'd*? then try whether *ye are call'd.* TRIAL.

1. YOUR Duty, at this Time, is not to look at Bread and Wine; but to diſcern and remember Chriſt's Death, and that as the Power of God, and Wiſdom of God. This is plainly the Apoſtle's Diſcourſe that you hear read at theſe Occaſions. Now, none can diſcern this, but thoſe who are call'd, to others he is Fooliſhneſs. Motives to try.

2. This is what Communicants are bid try, why they are bid examine themſelves, whether they are in Caſe to diſcern the Lord's Body? now only theſe that are call'd, are ſo. But how ſhall we know this? I anſwer,

1. Were ye ever made ſo ſenſible of, ſo convinc'd of your loſt Condition, your Sin, your Guilt, that ye could get no Peace, no Reſt, no Relief in your Fig-leaf Aprons; your Excuſes, Promiſes of Amendment, and other your beſt Duties, nor nothing elſe, till ye got from the Lord a powerful Diſcovery of Chriſt crucify'd? Nothing reliev'd the poor convinc'd Sinners, *Acts* ii. 37. till this came, Verſe 38. Marks to try by,

2. Have ye ever got ſuch a Diſcovery of the Power and Wiſdom of God in the Death of Chriſt, Chriſt crucify'd, as makes you not only not contemn it with the World, but makes

you delight in it, dwell on it in your Thoughts; place all your Comfort and Hope, in Life and Death, in Duty and Trials on it, counting all but Loſs, ſo you may get an Intereſt in this, and find the Power of it? *Phil.* iii. 8, 9, 10.

III. For Exhortation.

Now to you, who upon Trial, dare ſay you are called, we have a Word of Exhortation. Is Chriſt crucify'd the Power of God, and the Wiſdom of God? Then,

1. Think upon the Death of Chriſt, remember it; Can ye be Chriſtians, and not think on it? Nay, I had almoſt ſaid, can ye be Chriſtians and think upon any other Thing? It is a Wonder that the Thoughts of Chriſtians can fix upon any other Thing almoſt, that they are not full of this that's the Channel of their Salvation, and of all ſaving Mercies. Will ye not think on that whereon all depends, for which all is given you that ye want or expect? I know there are ſome that ſay, Miniſters preach too much of the Death of Chriſt; we would have them preſs Morality, we would have them preach Duties, Holineſs, Mortification to the World, the Love of God. O poor ignorant Souls! Is there any other way ſo effectual to bring about theſe Ends, as this? If Chriſt crucify'd is not preach'd, if he is not received, they will never be compaſs'd. If we dwelt more here, we ſhould be more holy, humble, mortify'd, love more. Other Things will never do it; 'tis Ignorance of the Goſpel that makes People prefer other Things, and poſtpone this.

2. Cele-

2. Celebrate the Memorial of the Death of Chriſt; Has he bid you remember it, preſcrib'd a Way to do it in, and will ye not do it, and do it in the way of his Appointment?

3. Prepare to remember it, prepare for the Celebration of it; there is manifold Wiſdom to be ſeen, many Powers to be felt in it: we have need to be prepared to diſcern, to improve, to claim them. How ſhall we prepare? What Preparation is meet? I anſwer,

1. Ye that are Learned Men, Scholars, Students, learn to know this Night that you are loſt Sinners, as well as others; and that your Wiſdom, your Learning will not ſave you: The Wiſdom of this World is Fooliſhneſs with God. I deſign no Reflection upon Learning; nay I would, were it needful, commend it to you: But I ſay this, becauſe the want of this, as the Verſe preceeding our Text, made the Learned *Greeks* caſt at Chriſt. Learn then that you're loſt, and that Chriſt crucify'd is the Power of God, and the Wiſdom of God to Salvation; this will be a meet Preparation. Prepare to diſcern the manifold Wiſdom of God here.

2. As to others, nay to you all, Learn'd or Unlearn'd, we ſay, look out, (1.) What are your Hazards, Dangers; here is to be preſented to you Chriſt crucified, the Power of God, the Wiſdom of God to ſave you from the Guilt of Sin, the Power of Sin, of Satan, of the World, Fears. (2.) Look out what are your Wants; here is a Death that's a Price for all you need, here is a rich Teſtament, here is a confirm'd Teſtament without Expences, all is cleared:

Here

Here ye may have a Pledge that the Testament is confirm'd, that your Name is in it. Nay here ye may enter to Possession, and obtain what ye need. (3.) Prepare Room to receive, Eyes to discern, dwell upon the Thoughts of this, turn your Eyes from other Things. Here many Things offer, but I may not encroach upon you, or others, who may entertain you better.

4. One Word more, and I have done with you. Ye that are call'd, shew forth his Death, openly profess it; be not asham'd of it, avouch it before the World, that ye look on the Death of Christ as the Glory of your Religion, and the Power of God to Salvation, now when it is contemn'd, when 'tis stumbled at. I must leave other Inferences to be drawn by your selves, I only offer this concluding Exhortation.

Is Christ *the Power of God to Salvation?* O labour for experimental Acquaintance with this Power; Power may be felt, let it be seen by your Life that Christ is Power, and that you have an Interest in it; seek an Experience of it this Night for quickening Graces, Love, Faith, Repentance, and killing Sin, and this will prepare you.

SER-

SERMON III.

Divine Manifeſtations; WITH Their Ends and Advantages iſſuing in Chriſtian Obedience and Eſtabliſhment.

MATTH. xvii. 5.

While he yet ſpake, behold a bright Cloud overſhadowed them, and behold a Voice out of the Cloud, which ſaid, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed; hear ye him.

YOU may perhaps think, the Choice of this Subject upon the Back of a Communion ſomewhat ſtrange; but if the Matter is well conſidered, I know none more ſuitable, and this, I hope, ſhall be made appear in our Proceſs. I ſhall, for clearing my Way to the Purpoſe we deſign to inſiſt on, and evincing the Suit-

Suitableneſs of it to this Occaſion, offer the few following *Remarks* upon the Context.

Firſt, The Lord Jeſus Chriſt did *here* upon the *Mount* glorioufly manifeſt himſelf to three of his Diſciples; and here, in like manner, in this Ordinance, *he hath been evidently ſet forth as crucified before you*; and ſome, we hope, on this Occaſion, have ſeen his Glory.

Secondly, The Diſciples, ſurpriſed and affrighted with the Glory of the Manifeſtation, knew not what to make of it, wiſt not what to ſay; but *Peter* begins to talk of *making Tabernacles, and dwelling on the Mount*: So ſome perhaps, may be at a Loſs what Improvement to make of this Manifeſtation of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt in this Sacrament.

Thirdly, While they are in this Confuſion, this ſeaſonable Inſtruction, as to the Intendment and Deſign of the Viſion, and Manifeſtation in the Words of our Reading, is ſent from Heaven: Hereby they are inſtructed what God deſigned, what they were called unto for their own Advantage, and what Return they ſhould make unto the Lord for his Goodneſs in the Manifeſtation.

This then is the Deſign of the Words, to direct how to improve a notable Divine Manifeſtation of the Glory of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

In the Words then, more particularly we may notice,

1*ſt*, The Seaſonableneſs of this Inſtruction, *While he yet ſpake*, at that very Inſtant when *Peter* was bewraying his Ignorance and Miſtake, this Voice is ſent to ſet him right again; Divine Inſtructions are well Tim'd, *Grace comes*

in

in Time of Need, when we are *turning to the right Hand or Left*, then it is the Voice behind us ſaith, *This is the Way, walk ye in it.* Heb. 4. 16. Iſa. 30. 21.

2*dly*, In the Words, we may take Notice of the manner of the Lord's Appearance, when he comes to inſtruct, *it is in a bright Cloud overſhadowing them*; hereby pointing out to us, (1.) That the Lord's Appearances are ſuited to our Neceſſities; when we are in the Dark, God manifeſts himſelf in Light, and as the Light. (2.) That the Lord appears, not only in a way ſuited to our Need, but ſweetly proportioned to our Strength; he appears in *Brightneſs*, but it is in a *bright Cloud*; we are not able to bear the brighteſt Light, the direct Beams of the glorious Fountain of Light, and can only look upon a reflected Light: Well, there is a Cloud interpoſed to reflect what Light we need, and keep us from the direct Rays of that Glory which we cannot bear, ſee *Exod.* xxxiii. 19, 20, *&c.* Again (3.) The Manner of the Lord's Appearance here, is in a Cloud, to point out the Swiftneſs of it, when his Peoples Need requires ſudden Help; Clouds are ſwift, hence we read of the Lord's *coming in Clouds*, and *of his making Way upon the Wings of the Wind.* (4.) The Refreſhment that is in Divine Manifeſtations, may be hereby intended *the bright Cloud overſhadowed them*: Shadows are refreſhing in ſcorching Heats, and Divine Manifeſtations are a Shelter againſt Temptations. Pſal. 18. 10.

3*dly*, We have the Means of Inſtruction, which the Lord makes Uſe of; it is a Voice out of the Cloud, a diſtinct, plain, ſweet and inſtructive Sound; a Mean that is firſt fami-

liar to us, and ſo ſuited to our Advantage, and which therefore, 2*dly*, carries not in it that Terror, which might indiſpoſe and put us out of Caſe, for taking up what God deſigns to make us underſtand. And 3*dly*, There appears much of Condeſcenſion to their Weakneſs, in their preſent Confuſion they were not capable to take up God's Mind, from the dark Hints of a ſymbolical Manifeſtation; wherefore God condeſcends to inſtruct them by plain Words, in the Meaning and Deſign of the Viſion, and their Duty.

4*thly*, We have here a double Note of Attention, the one prefixt to the ſeaſon and manner of God's Appearance, the other to the Inſtruction it ſelf: Hereby pointing out, 1. The natural Unſtayedneſs, Stupidity, and Inadvertency of the Mind of Man. 2. The Importance of the Things diſcovered. 3. The Neceſſity of Attention, in order to reach the Things deſigned by them. 4. The Neceſſity of obſerving every Circumſtance of Divine Manifeſtations, the Matter, the Manner, and the Seaſon.

5*thly*, We have here in the Words the Inſtruction it ſelf, and this reſpects two, or perhaps three Things. 1. The Confirmation of their Faith, as to the great Truths concerning the Son of God, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed*; as if the Voice had ſaid, The Deſign of this View of his Glory which ye have got, is not to be a Reſt, or Matter meerly of Comfort and Satisfaction to you at preſent, on which ye may ſit down, and which you are to expect the Continuance of; but it is to ſatisfy you fully that this Chriſt

Chriſt, whom the World contemns, rejects, oppoſeth and perſecuteth, and whom ere long you will ſee yet more deeply humbled; notwithſtanding all which this is yet my beloved Son, in whom I delight, and for whoſe ſake alone I accept of, and am well pleaſed with Elect Sinners. 2. We have a Direction as to Practice, *Hear ye him, i. e.* However mean his Appearance is at preſent, yet ye have Reaſon to own him as your Lord, and to ſubject your ſelves unto him: And to ſatisfy you of this, you have got this Foretaſte of the Glory he will appear in after his Humiliation is over. 3. The Voice inſtructs us in the powerful Influence of a confirmed Faith upon Practice, if we believe that he is the Son of God, Hearing and Obedience will follow upon it.

The Words afford many uſeful Truths, but I ſhall ſingle out this one, *That the great Scope of ſpecial and ſolemn Manifeſtations of the Lord's Glory to his Diſciples, is to confirm them in the Faith of the great Foundation Truths of Religion, and thereby lead them to the Obedience of Faith.*

That you may underſtand this Truth the better, it is to be obſerved, That by Manifeſtations, we intend thoſe Diſcoveries which the Lord is pleaſed to make of himſelf, his Attributes, his Will, and Works unto his People. 2. That theſe Diſcoveries are of two ſorts, *Special* and *Common*: This Diſtinction our Lord teacheth us himſelf, in that Diſcourſe of his with *Judas*, not *Iſcariot*, where we hear of Manifeſtations which he gives to the World in the Works of Creation and Providence, by the Law written on the Heart, and outward Ordinances; and we hear of ſpecial Manifeſta- John 14. 21, 22, 23,

tions which he gives not unto the World. 3. Theſe ſpecial ſaving Manifeſtations to his own People, are again of two Sorts, more ordinary, which they have for their common Allowance, in the Courſe of their Walk with God, and more ſolemn or extraordinary, which the Lord affords them on ſome ſpecial Occaſions; it is of this laſt ſort, that in the Doctrine is principally intended, though I ſhall not exclude even the more ordinary Manifeſtations that occur to the Lord's People in the Courſe of their Walk. As for the common Manifeſtations which he gives to the World, they come not within the Compaſs of our Conſideration at preſent: As for Scriptures confirming this Purpoſe, they will occur afterwards; at preſent, it is ſufficient that the Truth hath a plain Foundation in the Text. In proſecuting of it further, we ſhall in Order diſcourſe theſe Five Things.

1. We ſhall enquire in what Way, and by what Means it is, that God gives thoſe ſolemn and ſpecial Manifeſtations of himſelf.

2. What is intended by this Confirmation in the Faith of the Truths of Religion, that is the Deſign of thoſe Manifeſtations.

3. What is that Obedience of Faith that follows on this Confirmation, and is the other Part of the Deſign of ſpecial Manifeſtations.

4. We ſhall enquire how theſe Manifeſtations do confirm our Faith, and excite to Obedience.

5. I ſhall confirm the Truth of the Doctrine.

And

And *Laſtly*, Wynd up all in ſome practical Improvement.

The firſt general Head, By what Ways and Means doth the Lord give to his People theſe ſpecial and ſolemn Manifeſtations? In Anſwer to which, I ſay,

1. He does it in Ways and by Means extraordinary and miraculous at ſome Times, Means that are quite out of the common Road. There are Miracles in Grace, as well as in Nature, there are in God's Diſpenſations of Grace ordinary Means, which for moſt Part he uſeth, in governing and carrying on his Work in the Church; and there are extraordinary Ways to which ſometimes he hath Recourſe. Of this laſt ſort are Viſional Repreſentations, Dreams, Voices, Inſpirations, and the like. Such Manifeſtations *Moſes* and *Elias*, and many others of the Worthies of Old had, and ſuch is this in the Text; and of this Sort of Manifeſtations it is, that *Elihu* elegantly diſcourſeth. Job 33.14, 15, 16.

2. He gives ſpecial and ſolemn Manifeſtations of his Glory by the ſtanding Works of Creation, not meerly by preſenting them to their View; this all Men daily have, and thus they are always preſented to the People of God: But he then manifeſts himſelf ſolemnly by them, when he opens remarkably his Peoples Eyes, gives them an unuſual Light, ſhines on his Works, and gives them a ſpecial Diſcerning of the Prints of his Glory in them; ſuch the Pſalmiſt had, when he compoſed the 8th and 19th *Pſalms*. Again,

3. He gives ſpecial Manifeſtations of himſelf, when he is pleaſed to ſhine in an extraordinary

dinary way upon his ordinary Works of Providence, thereby enabling them to diſcern with unuſual Evidence the Beamings of his Glory in them; ſuch a Manifeſtation the Pſalmiſt had, when he compoſed that ſweet Meditation which we have in the 104th Pſalm; ſo great was the Glory of it, that he is put to pauſe in the Midſt of his Song, and give Vent to the deep Senſe he had of the Glory of the Lord ſhining in his Works, *Verſe* 24. *O Lord, how manifold are thy Works! in Wiſdom haſt thou made them all, the Earth is full of thy Riches.*

4. The Lord manifeſts himſelf ſolemnly to his People in and by ſpecial Providences, either towards themſelves, or the Church in general. Thus he manifeſted himſelf to *Abraham*, in ſtopping the Execution of his Son *Iſaac*; to *Jacob*, in delivering him from *Eſau*, to the Church in *Egypt* at the *Red-ſea*, in the Wilderneſs, at *Jordan*, and upon many other Occaſions.

Gen. 22: 11,--15.

5. The Lord manifeſts himſelf ſome-whiles glorioufly to his People in ſecret Duties, as to *Hannah*, to *Daniel*, &c.

6. The Lord manifeſts his Glory in a ſpecial and ſolemn way, by glorious Works of Grace inwardly wrought upon them. Thus he manifeſts himſelf to his People, at firſt Converſion, when he forms the new Creature, *tranſlates them out of Darkneſs into marvellous Light*, and afterwards diſcernably breaks the Power of ſtrong Corruptions, rebukes violent and ſtrong Temptations, or fills the Soul under great Trials with overflowing Conſolations; ſuch the Martyrs and Sufferers have had, and by them they were made exceeding joyful

in

in their Afflictions, and took joyfully the ſpoiling of their Goods.

7. The Lord manifeſts himſelf thus by his written Word, when in Reading, or in Meditation upon it, he opens their Eyes, to behold the Wonders of his Law in a warming and enlivening Light, and inſtructs them clearly in Things concerning himſelf; ſuch the Diſciples going to *Emmaus* had, when Chriſt converſed with them, *and opened the Scriptures to them.* Luke 24. 32.

8. The Lord moſt frequently gives theſe ſolemn and ſpecial Manifeſtations in publick Ordinances; *He loves the Gates of* Zion, *more than all the Dwellings of* Jacob. His Glory and Power have been *ſeen in the Sanctuary*; it is the *Place where his Honour dwells*, and they who out of Love to the Habitation of his Houſe enquire there, *do behold the Beauty of the Lord*; compare *Pſal.* xxvi. 8. with xxvii. and 4. And hence it is, that in his Temple, every one ſpeaks of his Glory. Pſal. 87. 2. Pſal. 63. 2.

9. The Lord doth frequently give ſuch ſolemn and ſpecial Manifeſtations in ſealing Ordinances, and particularly about the Time of the Adminiſtration of the *Lord's Supper.* It was about this Occaſion that he gave that glorious Diſcovery of himſelf, that makes up one of the ſweeteſt Parts of the Book of God; I mean the 14. and 17. Chapters of the Goſpel of *John*, as you may ſee by *John* xiii. 31. compared with Chap. 18. at the Beginning. In this Ordinance, if any where, Chriſt is evidently ſet forth crucified; here we are to remember him, and he is never behind with any; *he meets them that rejoice and work Righteouſneſs, thoſe that remember him in his Ways.* Iſa. 64. 5.

2. We

II. We now proceed to the next general Head, to enquire what is intended by this Confirmation in the Faith of the fundamental Truths of Religion which is one great Part of the Deſign of theſe ſolemn Manifeſtations, and here we ſhall ſhew, what is the Import of that Expreſſion, *This is my beloved Son*, &c. in ſo far as it points out the Deſign of this Manifeſtation; now I conceive that hereto theſe four Truths belong.

1. Increaſe of Knowledge about the Truths of Religion, *This is my beloved Son*, is as much as if it had been ſaid, You have got this Manifeſtation of his Glory, that you may know more diſtinctly and ſatisfyingly, that *this is my beloved Son*, and what Glory belongs to him, notwithſtanding his Majeſty is now for a Time vailed. Our Minds are naturally dark, and even after ſaving Illumination is begun, we know but in Part; and, from this Darkneſs, wavering proceeds; what we know but darkly, we eaſily ſuſpect, and eaſily ſlide into Miſtakes about it. Now the Lord, when he manifeſts himſelf, either diſcovers ſomewhat more than was formerly known, or ſets, what before was known, in a clearer Light, and hereby brings his People to a more full Underſtanding of divine Truths in their ſeveral Concernments, whereby the Mind is further eſtabliſhed or confirm'd about them. *Now know I*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *that the Lord ſaveth his Anointed*, *Pſal.* xx. 6. *Now I know*, ſaith *Jethro*, *that the Lord is greater than all Gods; for in the Thing wherein they dealt proudly, he was above them*, i. e. Though I did know ſomewhat of

of this before, yet now I underſtand it more diſtinctly, and am further confirmed in it.

2. To this Eſtabliſhment and Confirmation in Faith, there belongs a Fulneſs of perſuaſion, a Satisfaction, Compoſure or Quietneſs in the Soul, in believing the Truth, in Oppoſition to Uneaſineſs, Fears, Jealouſies and Doubtings. *This is my beloved Son*, that is, I have thus manifeſted his Glory, that you may not henceforth, by the Meanneſs of his appearance, or any further Steps of Humiliation, be brought to heſitate, or in the leaſt doubt of his being *my beloved Son*, but may reſt fully aſſured of his being ſo, in Spight of all contrary Appearances. *Now know I that the Lord ſaveth his Anointed*, is as much as if he had ſaid, I have no Suſpicion, heſitation or Scruple any more about it. Thus *Abraham* was confirmed as to the Truth of the Promiſes, or was fully perſwaded in his own Mind, reſting compoſed in the Faith. Much of the Vanity of the Mind of Man lies in an Inclination and Readineſs to fluctuate about, and ſuſpect divine Truths, ſpecial Manifeſtations are deſigned to cure the Darkneſs, and hereby to bring the Soul to compoſure and Reſt in the Faith of them, which is not the leaſt Part of Confirmation. Rom. 4. 21.

3. This Eſtabliſhment or Confirmation, at which Manifeſtations aim, implies Fixedneſs, Adherence and Conſtany of Perſuaſion, or Strength of Faith in Oppoſition to ſhocking Difficulties that may come in our Way. *This is my beloved Son*, you are not only now to give up with your Suſpicions, Doubtings and Fears of Miſtake; but afterwards, when this

Glance is gone, and when you ſhall ſee him mock'd, ſpit on, and put to Death, you are not to ſtagger at the Truth through Unbelief, but muſt hold to it. Thus *Abraham* ſtaggered not, but remained fix'd in his Perſwaſion, being nothing moved by contrary Appearances that ſeemed to ſhock his Faith, but againſt Hope believed in Hope.

Rom. 7. 17---20.

4. There belongs to this Confirmation in Faith a Confidence in laying Streſs upon the Truth, of which we are thus fixedly perſwaded; ſo *Abraham did*, and this is the genuine Fruit of it, *they that know his Name put their Truſt in him.* And hereof we have a notable Example in *Pſal.* 20. The Pſalmiſt being ſatisfied and confirmed in the Truth, *Ver. 6. Now know I that the Lord ſaveth his anointed*, proceeds in the ſubſequent Verſes. To lay the Streſs of his Preſervation from all Dangers on it, thus in the Text, *This is my beloved Son*, &c, is as much as if it had been ſaid, You have got this Manifeſtation, that you may be encouraged and emboldned to flee and cleave to him, lay Streſs on him, as to your Acceptance with God, and uſe him on all Occaſions.

Pſal. 9. 10.

III. We now come to ſhow what is that Obedience of Faith that flows from, and follows upon this Confirmation, which is intended here by the Words, *Hear ye him.* Manifeſtations are deſigned, *Firſt*, To ſatify us as to Truth, and then ultimately to lead to an anſwerable Deportment, this, *Hear ye him*: Then imports,

1. An Acknowledgement of him as the Lord, we muſt call Jeſus Lord, that is, Acknowledge or own, cloſe with, and accept of him

1 Cor. 12. 3.

him as one to whom Obedience is due: No ſooner did he manifeſt himſelf to *Thomas*, and eſtabliſh him in the Faith, but preſently *Ver.* 28 he cries out, *My Lord and my God.* John 20. 26, 27.

2. *Hear ye him*, imports Attendance on him to receive his Commands; it is the Buſineſs of Servants and Hand-maids to wait their Maſter's Will; and like *Iſaiah*, to be ready at every Call, to ſay, *Here am I.* Pſal. 123. 2. Iſai. 6. 8.

3. *Hear ye him*, That is, Credit him intirely; you are not to queſtion any Thing he ſays, nor diſpute any of his Commands.

4. *Hear him, i. e.* Obey him, yield a practical Compliance with whatever he enjoins; the Goſpel is ſent to all Nations for the Obedience of Faith, that crediting him, we may practically comply with his Will. Rom. 1. 5.

5. *Hear ye him*, imports the Reaſonableneſs of our Obedience; we are indeed to obey whatever he enjoins, but not till once he hath ſatisfied us, that he is the Lord, one every Way worthy of Obedience, and made us diſtinctly underſtand his Will. Thus Religion is a reaſonable Service; *Firſt*, we ſee him worthy of Command, then own him as ſuch. *Next*, We hear him give out his Will, and thereon obey.

6. *Hear ye him*, that is, Hear him only; we may call none other Maſter; for one is our Maſter, even Chriſt.

7. *Hear ye him*, imports a Readineſs in our Obedience; you muſt obey him at Hearing, as the Word is, *Pſal.* 18. 44. no ſooner muſt we hear, but inſtantly we muſt comply.

8. *Hear ye him*, that is, You muſt yield univerſal unlimited Obedience, without any Re-

ſerve; your Obedience muſt be univerſal. 1. As to the Matter, we muſt obey and believe him in all Things, whatever he reveals, we muſt aſſent to it, how many Objections ſoever ly againſt it, and what he enjoins, we muſt do whatever Difficulties are in the Way, of both we have an Inſtance in the Caſe of *Abraham*. 2. Ye muſt hear him in whatever Manner he ſpeaks to you, not only when he ſpeaks as God doth here from Heaven the Throne of his Glory, where the Greatneſs of his preſent Appearance reflects a Majeſty upon his Words and Commands; but even after, when he is down from the Mount, and ſpeaks to us in his ordinary Preaching, or by the Mouth of the Meaneſt Inſtruments he is pleaſed to imploy, even when the Meanneſs of their Appearance darkens, as it were, the Evidence of their being his Servants, yet even then we are to diſcern, hear, believe and obey his Voice. 3. We muſt yield univerſal Obedience as to Times, we muſt hear and obey him at all Times, conſtantly, even unto the End.

Rom. 4. 19, 21, 22.

This we have inſiſted upon mose largely, becauſe of its ſuitableneſs unto the preſent Occaſion, it is what you are call'd to, and is the beſt Return that you can give the Lord for his Kindneſs upon this Occaſion, to hear his Son.

IV. We are now come to our next Enquiry, how theſe ſolemn and ſpecial Manifeſtations do confirm or eſtabliſh in the Faith of the fundamental Truths of Religion, in Anſwer to this noble Queſtion, which would deſerve more

Time

Time than we can now allow it, I ſhall only offer the few following Particulars.

1. In divine Manifeſtations, there always is a convincing and overpowering Light or Evidence that ſweetly ſways the Mind, and draws it powerfully to aſſent and reſt ſatisfied in the Truth of what is thus manifeſted. Evidence is always the Ground of Perſwaſion, the more there is of it, the more quiet and eaſie the Mind is; and this is the Glory of Divine Manifeſtations, that there is much of this Convincing Evidence in them, whatever Doubts the Soul may be under before, yet when the Lord appears, at the Brightneſs that is before him, theſe dark Clouds flee away, and the moſt wavering Soul is pleaſantly conſtrained to give up all its Doubts, and yield its Aſſent to Divine Truths enforced by this overpowering Light, like *Thomas* that cries out, *My Lord and my God*, or like *Nathanael*, *Rabbi, thou art the King of Iſrael, thou art the Son of God*; and like the *Iſraelites*, even the rebellious *Iſraelites*, *And when all the People ſaw it, they fell on their Faces, and ſaid, The Lord he is the God, the Lord he is the God*; much more is the Evidence convincing, where there is a renewed Underſtanding to diſcern it, Objections cannot ſtand before it.

John 20. 28. Joh. 1.49. 1 Kings 18. 39.

2. In Divine Manifeſtations, there is not only overpowering Evidence, as to the Truths; but there is inſtructive Light, as to the Nature of the Things revealed; either ſomewhat formerly not known, is made known, or what was formerly known, is now more diſtinctly and clearly revealed, ſaving Manifeſtations always inform or enlighten the Mind. Now, as the Evidence

Evidence of the Manifeſtation overpowers un to an Aſſent for the Time, fixeth a Conviction repels Objections, making them unable t ſhake the Mind while it laſts: So this inſtru ctive Light, as to the Nature of the Thing revealed, takes off the force of them, and re moves, if duly improven, the Ground of them in Time coming; all Objections flow from Ignorance of Things, and ſtill as Knowledg increaſeth, theſe evaniſh. In this Manifeſta tion here made to the Diſciples, we have a pleaſant Inſtance of this Sort, here we have a ſweet Inſtruction obviating and laying a Foun dation for Anſwer to the principal Objection againſt Chriſt, four Things were much inſiſted on againſt him. 1. ſome ſtumbled at him, be cauſe his Appearance was mean, there was no Form nor Comelineſs in him, why he ſhould be deſired; but in this Manifeſtation, the Vail was taken off, and he was ſeen in his Glory, and they were inſtructed that he had Robes of Glory, though for a while he thought meet to lay them aſide. 2. He was accuſed of Oppoſition to *Moſes* and the Prophets; here in this Manifeſtation, the ſweet Harmony and Conſent betwixt them is evidently diſcovered while *Moſes* the famous Founder, and *Elijah* the zealous Reformer and Aſſerter of the old Teſtament OEconomy meet with, ſweetly converſe together, and agree with Jeſus Chriſt. 3. Many ſtumbled at his Death as inconſiſtent with the Honour and Glory of the *Meſſiah*; but here the Sinews of this Objection are cut, he never appeared to them in ſuch Glory as now, when he is upon a ſolemn Converſation on this Subject; for we are told that

by the Spirit of God, that they ſpoke of his Deceaſe, which he ſhould accompliſh at *Jeruſalem*. 4. Many ſtumbled at his pretending and owning himſelf the Son of God, but here his Pretenſions are juſtified by a Glory anſwerable to that Relation by the Attendance of *Moſes* and *Elias*, two of thoſe whom God had moſt honoured among the Sons of Men; and to crown all, by a Voice from Heaven, directly aſſerting the Juſtice of his Pretenſions. Thus we ſee that Divine Manifeſtations ſweetly inſtruct in the Nature of the Things revealed; and thereby cut off Objections, whereby the Mind is not only compoſed, but kept in Quiet. Many other Inſtances of the like Nature I might give from Scripture, but the narrow Limits to which our Time is confined, will not allow.

3. There is always in theſe ſpecial and ſolemn Manifeſtations, ſome Taſte of the ſweetneſs and Goodneſs of the Lord himſelf, and of Divine Truth, as a Beam from that ſweet Fountain of Truth, that draws over the Will and Affections to cleave unto the Lord, and unto Truth; and this is the real Spring of Stability and Firmneſs in Truth. Dry Notions will never keep men ſtable; they who have received the Truth, but not in the Love thereof, will be ſoon drawn over to quit it for Deluſions; but in Divine Manifeſtations there is ſtill ſomewhat of Enjoyment that obliges them to think, that it is good to be there, as *Peter* ſays in the Verſe before our Text; and this engages the Soul to ſtick faſt; for the Spring of Defection is commonly the ſtruggling of the Will, and Averſion of the Affecti-

Affections; theſe increaſe our Darkneſs, occaſion Wavering, and ſuggeſt Prejudices againſt the Lord, his Truth, and Ways.

(4.) Special and ſolemn Manifeſtations of the Lord's Glory are always accompanied with an Experience of the Power of Truth: There is a manifold Power attending Divine Truths and Manifeſtations, they have a Soul-quickening, compoſing, warming, and Soul-transforming Power; and of this Power the People of God have ſweet Experience, when he manifeſts himſelf; when they ſee his Glory, they alſo feel his Power in the Sanctuary. This Power makes ſtrong and abiding Impreſſions on the Soul, that go deep into, and ſtick faſt. When he appears in his Glory, he lays the Hand of his Power on them, and by it raiſes them up, and ſays unto them, *Fear not*: This is ſtrongly engaging, and ſenſible. It was the feeling of this that had a reviving Influence on the Diſciples. *Did not our Hearts burn within us while he talked with us by the Way, and opened to us the Scriptures.* It was not ſo much the Notions of Truth that ſtuck with them, as the Power that went along with them. This will embolden People to avouch, plead for and ſtick to Truth, whoever is againſt it, and whatever it coſt them, when they find the good Effects of it upon their own Souls. *I am ready*, ſays the Apoſtle, *to preach the Goſpel, as much as in me is, to you alſo that are at Rome; for I am not aſhamed of the Goſpel of Chriſt; for it is the Power of God to Salvation to every one that believes, to the Jew firſt, and alſo to the Greek.*

Pſal. 63. 2.

Rev. 1. 17.

Luke 24. 32.

Rom. 1. 15, 16.

(5.) In Divine Manifeſtations of the Lord's Glory, there is always a Suitableneſs unto the Caſe

Caſe, the Trials and Neceſſities of the Perſons to whom he manifeſts himſelf; either they are ſuitable to their preſent Condition, or to Duties, trials and Difficulties they have been in, or ſhall ſpeedily be called to. When *Abraham* is to leave his Father's Houſe, and to go out not knowing whither, to leave Friends, Relations and Means, then God manifeſts himſelf to him as God Almighty, or God all-ſufficient, one that, in the Want of all Things, could be all Things to him. One who could protect, be a Shield and Defence, and ſupply him, or be his rich Reward and Up-making for all that he could quit or loſe in following God. When *Iſrael* is in Bondage, the Lord manifeſts himſelf as Jehovah, that is, the Performer of Promiſes. Here, when the Diſciples are to be melancholy Witneſſes of Chriſt's Sufferings, they get a pleaſant View of his Glory, to arm them for it before-hand. Now, every Thing is more or leſs ſweet to a Perſon, as it is more or leſs agreeable to his Caſe, Neceſſities and Trials; and this is that which makes Divine Manifeſtations pleaſant, when they are found ſweetly to ſuit the Caſe, and meet with the need of the Lord's People. Nothing will pleaſe a hungry Man ſave Meat, nor a thirſty Man but Drink. He that would deſpiſe Rubies, when ſtarving for Hunger, will greedily graſp at a Piece of Bread. And this is the Glory of Divine Manifeſtations, that they ever exactly meet with the Neceſſities of the People to whom they are made. That which makes People deſert any Way they have been in, is the finding it fail them in their Need, and not anſwer their Caſe, but the

Gen. 15. 1. & 17. 1. Exod. 6. 3.

Lord reveals that what they now need, is to be found in him; and this makes them chearfully abide by him. And though, at preſent, they know not what theſe Things mean, yet afterwards they come to know more clearly, and this makes them ſtable, and engages to adhere firmly. It may be the Diſciples knew not well now what need there was of this View of Chriſt's Glory, but afterwards they well underſtood it.

6. Theſe Manifeſtations always humble, and Humility is the Strength of all Grace. When *Iſaiah* ſaw his Glory, he was deeply abaſed, and cried out, *Wo is me, for I am undone, becauſe I am a Man of unclean Lips.* *Job*, when he ſaw him, loathed and abhorred himſelf. Now, Self-confidence is the greateſt Weakneſs: When we truſt to our ſelves, we truſt our Support to a Drop cut off from the Fountain, that will not laſt: When we are ſtrong in our own Eyes, we are then weak: *Peter* was never ſo weak, as when proud and ſelf-confident. On the other Hand, Humility is the going out of our ſelves, and laying all the Streſs on the Lord: It has the Promiſe of his Preſence, *He will dwell with the humble, he will look to him; he gives Grace to the humble; he hears the Deſire of the humble.*

Iſai. 6. 5.

Job 42. 4, 5.

We might add much more on this Head, but we muſt leave it, and go on.

5. The Confirmation of the Doctrine is that which follows next: We might have done this at firſt, but ye will underſtand it the better now, after the Truth is explained.

This Truth then, that it is the great Scope and Deſign of ſpecial and ſolemn Manifeſtati-

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ons of the Lord's Glory, to confirm his People in the Faith of the great Truths of Religion, and thereby to lead them to Obedience, is evident.

1. From expreſs divine Teſtimonies, *And many other Signs did Jeſus in the Preſence of his Diſciples, which are not written in this Book; but theſe are written, that ye might believe that Jeſus is the Chriſt, the Son of God; and that, believing, ye might have Life through his Name.* And in the old Teſtament, whenever the Lord makes any Manifeſtation of himſelf, or promiſes to do it, he always adds this Account of the Deſign, *That ye may know that I am the Lord.* This is repeated in Scripture, Times almoſt without Number: And from that very obſervable, but I fear little obſerved, Expreſſion, we may notice, that even the Lord's People have Need to be taught this, *That God is the Lord.* It is not ſuch an eaſie Matter, as many think, to come to believe that God is. John 20. 30, 31.

2. This was once and again ſpoke plainly by a Voice from Heaven, at this Occaſion, and on Chriſt's Baptiſm. When the Lord appeared or diſcovered ſomewhat of his Glory, it was intimated by a Voice from the excellent Glory, that the Deſign of all was, to make them believe, or confirm them in the Belief of this, *That Chriſt is the Son of God.*

3. This Effect it had upon the Diſciples, it confirmed them in Faith, when the Lord manifeſted his Glory; and it is obſerved with Approbation. *This Beginning of Miracles did Jeſus in* Cana *of* Galilee, *and manifeſted forth his Glory, and his Diſciples believed on his Name.* Joh. 2. 11.

4. We find the Saints taking Notes, as it were, of ſuch Manifeſtations, for their own Eſtabliſhment. *Abraham* ſets up his *Jehovah-jireh*, and *Jacob* his *El-Elohe-Iſrael*; to keep this in their Minds, That God, the God of *Iſrael*, he is the God, and he ſeaſonably ſteps in, in Times of Extremity.

Gen. 22.

Gen. 33. 20.

I am ſenſible that many other Things would have pertinently fallen under our Conſideration here, and had been neceſſary, if our Time could have allowed.

1. It might have been enquired, What are theſe Fundamental Truths, wherein the Lord would have his People confirmed? I might have condeſcended on many: He deſigns to have them eſtabliſhed in the Faith of this, *That the Lord he is God*; in the Faith of theſe Truths that concern the Perſon of Chriſt, that he is the Beloved Son of God, God in our Nature, and in thoſe that concern his Offices, that in him he is well pleaſed with us, and that Acceptance with him is only to be had by his Beloved Son; with many others of the like Nature.

2. It might have been enquired, Wherefore is it neceſſary that the Lord's People ſhould not only believe the Truths, but that they ſhould be confirmed or eſtabliſhed in the Faith of them. In Anſwer to this, I might have ſhewed you at Length, that they are great Things, and ſo not to be received, but upon the ſtrongeſt Grounds, that there is much to venture on them; we are to venture all for Time and Eternity on them; and therefore we had need be well ſecured that the Foundation be good, when we venture ſo much: There

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are many Things to try us, and we had need to be well eſtabliſhed. The great Deſign of Enemies is to overturn the Foundations; and therefore we had need to be well fixed in them. We cannot glorifie God, unleſs we offer him reaſonable Service; and our Service can never be reaſonable, if we are not clear and well fixed, as to the Grounds we go on. In a Word, we might have made it appear that our Safety, our Comfort, our Uſefulneſs for the Good of others, the Honour of Religion, and the Glory of God, are all concerned in this Matter, and cannot be obtained, but by being eſtabliſhed in Religion.

3. It may be enquired, How Satan's Deluſions, and divine Manifeſtations may be diſtinguiſhed. In Anſwer hereto I might have offered many Things. True divine Manifeſtations are to be expected (whatever God ſometimes, eſpecially at firſt Converſion, may do in a Way of Sovereignty) only in the Way of Duty. While, like the Diſciples here, we are in Chriſt's Company, they enlighten the Mind in the ſolid Knowledge of God; by them we are led to know more diſtinctly, that he is the Lord, and that Chriſt is the Way to him, that in him he is well pleaſed. They are always ſuitable to the Scripture; they lead to Obedience to hear the Son of God; they humble the Perſons that get them; they endear the Lord and his Way.

John 14. 21, 23.

Iſai. 8. 20.

Job 42. 5, 6.

Pſal. 63. 1.

4. Here alſo it might have been enquired, What Influence hath this Confirmation in Faith upon Obedience? And in Anſwer to this, I might have ſhewed you that it ſtrengthens the Principle of Obedience, which is Faith in the Word;

Word; it ſtrengthens the Motives to Obedience; it takes away Hindrances; it quickens the Soul: But theſe Things we muſt wave, and go on to the Application.

It now only remains that we draw ſome Inferences, or make ſome ſhort Improvement of the Point hitherto diſcourſed; and becauſe we have already inſiſted long, here we ſhall be ſhort.

Is it ſo then, that it is the great Deſign of divine Manifeſtations to confirm the People of God in the Faith of the great Truths of Religion, and lead them to the Obedience of Faith? Then we may infer hence,

1. Surely Atheiſm and Unbelief are deeply rooted in the Hearts of all; and even the Lord's People, by Nature, are as much under their Power as others: If it were not ſo, what would be the Need of confirming, eſtabliſhing Manifeſtations?

2. All have Reaſon to lay their Account to meet with Aſſaults about the Truths of Religion. When the Lord is at ſo much Pains to eſtabliſh, it ſays, that ſhaking Trials are likely to come: He doth nothing in vain.

3. It ſays this to you, that Eſtabliſhment in the Faith is a Matter of very great Moment and Importance; otherwiſe God would not, beſides all ordinary Means for begetting and ſtrengthning Faith, give ſuch ſpecial and unuſual Manifeſtations.

4. Learn here alſo how abominable that Principle is, that many have in their Heads and Mouths, That there is no great Need to look what Peoples Principles are, if they live but well. To make Men live well, they muſt not

not only have good Principles, be found in the Faith, but be well rooted and eſtabliſhed in it; and this is not ſo eaſy a Matter as many take it to be.

5. Think it not ſtrange that ye meet with Toſſings about the Fundamental Truths in Religion; you ſee the Lord's People have met with ſuch, and here the Lord provides Help againſt ſuch Trials.

6. We may hence learn alſo, that our own Reaſonings will not quiet our Souls: Peace and Joy are only to be had in believing; and divine Manifeſtations are needful to draw out, and ſtrengthen Faith.

7. Wonder at the Condeſcenſion of God, that manifeſts himſelf to the Sons of Men. I ſhall now paſs many other Inferences for Inſtruction, Trial, Reproof, and wind up all in a ſhort Addreſs.

1. To theſe who are Strangers, to all ſaving and ſpecial Manifeſtations.

2. To ſuch who miſs them at preſent, and lament their Want of them.

3. To thoſe to whom the Lord has, in any Meaſure, manifeſted himſelf, at this time.

1. There are ſome of you who never had any ſpecial Manifeſtations of the Lord, and care not much for it. This is too evident to be denied.

2. Are there not many of you who live in Sin, walk in Darkneſs, in the Practice of, Love and Regard to, known Evils? If you ſay you have any Manifeſtation of, or Fellowſhip with God, you are by himſelf pronounced *Liars*. 1 Joh. 1.6.

3. Are there not many of you who never ſaw any Beauty in Chriſt, to make you prize him,

him, or part with any thing for him? You never ſaw that Worth in the Pearl, as to engage you to think of parting with all, that you might get the Pearl.

Matth. 13. 44, 46.

4. Are there not many of you, who have no Deſires of, Uſe for, nor Endeavours after Diſcoveries of the Lord's Glory? It is otherwiſe with them, who ever were brought to know any thing of the Lord.

Pſ. 63. 1, 2. Pſal. 27. 4.

5. Are there not many among you, who do not truſt Chriſt, either as to Righteouſneſs, Direction in your Way, or Strength? And is not this a clear Proof, that ye know him not? For they that know his Name, will put their *Truſt in him.*

Pſal. 9. 10.

Now to you who are in this Caſe, I have a few Things to offer: And,

1. You are yet in Darkneſs: When the Lord is ſo many ways ſet before you, and you have never diſcerned his Glory, it muſt certainly be, becauſe there is no Light in you.

2. You have loſt the Benefit of all Ordinances; for this is the Drift, the great Scope of *them.*

John 20. 30, 31.

3. In particular you have miſſed the Mark here in this Ordinance; for the Deſign of it is to hold Chriſt forth, that he may be *diſcerned* and ſince you have not diſcerned him, ye have miſſed the Aim of it.

4. If then now, or formerly, you have approached this Table, you have eaten and drunk unworthily, incurred the Guilt of his Body and Blood, eaten and drunk Judgment to your ſelves *not diſcerning the Lord's Body.*

1 Cor. 11. 29.

5. Ye are poor unſtable Souls. 'Tis impoſſible ye can be firm or ſtable in any Matter of

Religion. No Man knows God, ſave the Perſon to whomſoever the Son manifeſts or declares him.

6. If Trials come, and ye meet with any Aſſault as to the Truths of Religion, ye that never had any Manifeſtations, will ſoon quit your Hold, and give up with Truth. They that have not received Truth in the Love of it, will ſoon give it up.

7. Ye have no Part nor Portion in Heaven; you have no Title to it. This can never be had ſave by Chriſt, and an Intereſt you can never have in him, ſave by his manifeſting himſelf to you. Ye can have no Notion of it: He only can tell you what Heaven is, and what you are to expect beyond Time; and ſo you cannot really deſire that which you cannot know. I know ye all think, O! if we were in Heaven! But this is only a Heaven of your own Imagination and Framing. But it is impoſſible for any unrenewed Man to wiſh ſeriouſly for that Heaven, where Holineſs and Happineſs are for ever linked together. In a Word, ye are not meet for it; for it is only the viewing of the Lord's Glory that changes us *unto his Likeneſs*, and ſo makes us meet for *the Inheritance of the Saints in Light.* 2Cor.3.18.

Well then, poor miſerable Souls, 1. Bethink your ſelves ſeriouſly of the Miſery of your Caſe. 2. Cry to God, that he may open your Eyes to ſee it. 3. Cry that the Lord may manifeſt himſelf to you. 4. Wait on him in the Way of Duty. 5. Guard againſt Sin, known Sins that do provoke the Lord to hide his Face. Beware ye reſt not in this miſerable

Caſe, eſtranged from God, from Chriſt, and from ſaving Light.

2. I ſhall next offer a Word to them, who, though it may be formerly they have known ſomewhat of divine Manifeſtations, miſs them at preſent.

1. Perhaps the Lord hath manifeſted himſelf, but ye have misken'd him. This was the Caſe with many, when Chriſt came in the Fleſh. Becauſe he appeared not in all that Glory that they expected, they would not ſuffer themſelves to believe it was He. Well, perhaps it may be ſo with you. Though Chriſt hath manifeſted himſelf as the Heart-ſearcher, diſcovering Sins, and as holy, in reproving you for them, as God Almighty, inviting you to truſt him, and ſo forth; yet becauſe you have not been filled with Joy, got Apples and the like, you think you have got nothing.

2. If it really is ſo, is there not a Cauſe why he has hid himſelf? Well, ſearch it out, turn inwards, obſerve how Matters ſtand, how they formerly have been, and now are; and if there be Iniquity in thy Hand, then remove it far from thee.

3. Beware of ſitting down in this Caſe, without, at leaſt, the ordinary Evidence of the Lord's Countenance: That is dangerous; for here is the plain Road to backſliding. 1. We miſs, and are uneaſie about it: We want his Preſence for a while, and our Trouble grows leſs; and then we want, and turn eaſie, and content to want. This is a dangerous Caſe.

4. Yet quarrel him not; he muſt be allow'd his own Will, even in the more ordinary Manifeſtations of himſelf in the Courſe of our Walk with

with God; much leſs is he to be limited in this, where there is more of Sovereignty in the Diſpenſation.

5. Entertain kind Thoughts of him, even when he hides himſelf.

6. Let him hear oft from you, when ye ſee him not.

7. Keep his Words, and then you are in the Way to get this Want ſupplied. John 14. 21, 23.

8. Be humble; he has promiſed to look to the humble. Iſai. 66. 2.

9. Stir up your ſelves to take hold on him, wait on him in all Duties of his Appointment. Go yet a little further, and then,

10. I ſay, *In the Mount of the Lord it ſhall be ſeen.* He ſhall be ſeen in due time; he will manifeſt himſelf diſtinctly to you, and make you to hear his Voice, and behold his Glory, to your unſpeakable Comfort.

3. I ſhall now cloſe all with a Word to thoſe to whom the Lord has, upon this Occaſion, manifeſted himſelf in a ſpecial and ſolemn Way. And,

1. We ſay to you, Try well that ye be not deceived with Deluſions, inſtead of Manifeſtations. When Chriſt offers the true Ware, Satan is then ready with his Counterfeit.

2. Do not rave, and talk of building Tabernacles; this will not laſt, the Diſciples muſt down from the Mount again.

3. Be humble, mind, theſe Manifeſtations will not keep you from Miſtakes; ye ſee the Diſciples fell into Miſtakes, when on the *Mount*, and fell in their Walk afterward: Therefore be humble.

4. Look up for divine Teaching, how to guide your Manifeſtations; what Uſe to make of them.

5. Be ſure ye mind that this is always one great Deſign of them, to eſtabliſh and confirm you in the Faith of the firſt and great Truths of Religion, and pray improve them to this Purpoſe carefully.

SER-

SERMON IV.

Divine Influences:

OR,

The Caſe and Cure of theſe under ſpiritual Decays.

HOSEA xiv. 5.

I will be as the Dew unto Iſrael: He ſhall grow as the Lilly, and caſt forth his Roots as Lebanon.

THE Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the great Phyſician of Souls, has ſet a Tryſt with his People in this Place, and intimated a Deſign of meeting with you here, in a familiar Manner, at his own Table. His Servants are come before, to prepare you for meeting with him, and to hold forth to you, what you need at his Hand, what Help he is

is capable to afford you, and what you are called to look for from him.

Among the many Cases he undertakes to cure, there is one mentioned in this Chapter, *viz.* that of spiritual Decays, and of his Skill in curing this, we purpose, as the Lord shall enable, to discourse at this time; because it is one of the most dangerous and stubborn Diseases incident to Christians, and a Disease, I am afraid, too too common this Day: And finally, it is a Disease, to the Cure of which the Discovery the Lord makes of himself in this Sacrament, is remarkably adapted.

The Prophet having, in the foregoing Prophecies of this Book, held forth the general Apostasy of the Church, and threatned the Body of the People with utter and irrecoverable Ruin, comes, in this Chapter, to address himself to the godly Remnant, to whom the Lord designed Mercy. And,

1. He gives them a general Hint of the Danger of their Case, they were fallen by their *Iniquities*, *Vers.* 1. joined with a Call to return, and apply to him for Cure.

2. He gives them suitable Directions, as to their Duty, and tells them how they were to apply, *Vers.* 2, 3.

3. He promises Healing, 1. in general, *V.* 4. at the Beginning, and 2. in particular, the Removal of the Cause of their Diseases, *V.* 4. and 3. in the Words of our Reading, *a perfect Cure*; and describes the glorious Effects of this in the subsequent Verses, 5, 6, 7, 8.

4. He concludes with a solemn Admonition, that it would be found their Wisdom to im-

improve, and their Folly to reject this friendly Tender, *Verſ.* 9.

The Words I have read contain a gracious Promiſe of a Cure of their ſpiritual Decays; and for underſtanding the Meaning of them, we muſt notice,

1. The Perſons to whom the Promiſe is made; it is *Iſrael*, the Remnant of his Church, to whom the Lord deſigned Mercy, and who ſhould comply with the gracious Call, to return, given them in the foregoing Verſes.

2. We muſt take Notice of their Caſe, in which this and the other Promiſes of the Context ſuppoſes them at the Time, and that is, they were ſpiritually decayed; all their Graces were in a withering and languiſhing Condition, like Graſs parch'd with Heat, from which Rain and Dew have for a long time been withholden, till it is dried up by the Roots. That this was their Caſe, and even the Caſe of the Godly among them, is evident from plain Repreſentations every where through the Prophecy: *Strangers have devoured his Strength, and he knoweth it not; yea, gray Hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth it not.* Hoſ. 7. 9. Nor is there one Direction or Branch of the Promiſe here made, but what ſpeaks plainly this to be the Caſe.

3. We muſt notice in the Words, the Thing promiſed, and that is a Reſtorative, *I will be as the Dew*: What the Dew is to the Graſs, that I will be to him. The Thing intended is freſh Diſcoveries of the Lord, and Supplies of his Spirit, working ſuch Effects on them, as the Dew has upon the decayed Graſs.

4. We

4. We are to obſerve the Engagement of the Lord's Faithfulneſs for this, *I will be as the Dew*: It is not merely that he can, but that he will, eventually, really and certainly be ſo.

The Words thus ſhortly explained afford us this Point of Doctrine.

That the Lord JEHOVAH *has, by Promiſe, bound himſelf to be, to his decayed* Iſrael, *upon their Return to him,* as the Dew, *a Fountain of reviving and reſtoring Influences, or Supplies of Grace.*

Iſai. xliv. 3. *I will pour Water on him that is thirſty, and Floods upon the dry Ground: I will pour my Spirit on thy Seed, and my Bleſſing upon thine Offspring:* Verſ. 4. *And they ſhall ſpring as among the Graſs, as Willows by the Water-courſes;* and as he has promiſed, ſo he has done. *Pſal.* ciii. 2. *Bleſs the Lord, O my Soul, and forget not all his Benefits*; Verſ. 3. *Who forgiveth all thine Iniquities; who healeth all thy Diſeaſes:* Verſ. 5. *Who ſatisfieth thy Mouth with good Things; ſo that thy Youth is renewed as the Eagle's.*

In the further Proſecution of this Point, it will be needful to ſpeak,

I. Of the Cauſe of ſpiritual Decays, that we may know the Nature of the Diſeaſe.

II. Of *Iſrael*, the People who may expect this Recovery.

III. Of the Means of their Recovery, where the Force of that Expreſſion, the Lord's *being as the Dew*, will fall under our Conſideration.

IV. Some Reaſons of the Point may be conſidered on.

I. It is needful to ſpeak ſomewhat concerning the Diſeaſe, to which this Promiſe in the Text

relates. What that is, all the Promiſes of the Context clearly hold out; the Promiſes of Revival, Recovery, Reſtoration, ſay, that their Caſe was a decay'd, withered one; and the Nature of that Reſtoration ſays, that their Diſeaſe lay mainly in Spirituals; for all the Remedies are ſuch, as ſhall be clear'd in our Progreſs. Well then, for clearing this Matter, I ſhall offer you ſome Remarks concerning the Caſe. And,

1. It is to be obſerv'd, That all the true *Iſrael*, at Converſion, have a Principle of Spiritual Life imparted to them, that of its own Nature is apt to grow, thrive, and bring forth Fruit. They *are alive unto God, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* Rom. vi. 11. *Alive from the Dead*, Verſe 13. *Trees of Righteouſneſs, the Planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.* Iſa. 61. 1. They are ordain'd, *that they ſhould go and bring forth Fruit.* As the new Nature is of it ſelf John 15. 16. diſpos'd to grow and thrive, ſo there are many Means ſuited to promote its Growth, and Supplies ordain'd for that End; through which, uſually, for ſome Time after Converſion, they, that are planted by his Grace in the Courts of his Houſe, grow up apace.

2. But this, notwithſtanding ſpiritual Decays, do frequently, in the Courſe of their Profeſſion, ſooner or later befall many, even of the true *Iſrael*. The Work of God is at a Stand, Life and Strength languiſh and Decay; there is a ſad Defect as to inward Vigour, outward Beauty and Fruitfulneſs. This might be made appear by Inſtances not a few; this ſeems to have been the general Caſe of the Church of *Sardis*, the Profeſſors in it had a Name

Rev. 3. 1. to live, and were dead; as also of the Church
Rev. 3. 15, 16, 17. of *Laodicea*. Such also befell *David*, after his Sin in the Matter of *Bathsheba* and *Uriah*, that for a long Time he was under a Decay is past Question, and whether ever he altogether recover'd that wonted Vigour in the Ways of God is a Question. 'Tis said, *The Lord was*
2 Chron. 17. 3. *with* Jehoshaphat, *because he walked in the first Ways of his Father* David; importing, that his last Ways came not up to his first. Others, I know, as the Margin of some of your Bibles has it, render the Words otherwise, *The first Ways of his Father and* David. And I know not if even this, tho' it takes in *Asa*, who was another notable Instance of this sad Truth, will exeem *David*. But we need not dispute this, the Instances given are sufficient; and others, such as *Solomon*, might be mention'd, whose Decays run to so great a Height, that were it not for the Testimony of the Word, it would be question'd whether ever he had true Grace; and his Recovery is so vail'd, as may be a Warning to all. But our own Experience, in these Days wherein we live, afford too many Instances.

3. These Decays usually take Rise from one of two Things; either, from some sudden Surprisal in Sin, some notable Provocation, thus it was with *David*; or, they creep on secretly by insensible Degrees, gradually advancing until the Persons are brought to the sad Cas above-mentioned, and afterward to be mor fully explain'd; and, we conceive this last Wa is the more usual Way of their coming on.

4. This Case, however Decays creep on or from whatever Occasion, is truly one of th

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moſt ſad and diſmal Conditions that can well be thought of. Let us but view it as 'tis repreſented, more may be learn'd from the Context, where the Recovery is oppos'd to it.

(1.) In this Caſe, the Conſcience lies under the Defilement, and Burden of unremov'd Guilt: Hence the firſt Word put in their Mouth, *Verſe* 2. is, *Take away all Iniquity*, and *Verſe* 1. *Thou haſt fallen by thine Iniquity.*

(2.) On account of their Sins, they were plung'd into many Straits both ſpiritual and outward. *Thou haſt fallen from the happy State thou waſt in, into a miſerable one.*

(3.) In their Straits, they, as it were, forgot wonted Reliefs, had loſt Confidence in God, doubted of gracious Reception, as is evident from the Direction given them, *Verſe* 2, and run fooliſhly to carnal Confidences, *Aſhur*, &c. as we ſee *Verſe* 3. where by *Aſhur*, *Horſes*, and other Gods, we are to underſtand all ſorts of carnal Confidences, to which a People, when backſliding from God, are ready to betake themſelves; People in ſuch a Caſe, anſwer the Character given of *Ephraim*, Ephraim *is like a ſilly Dove, without Heart; they call to* Egypt, *they go to* Aſſyria. Hoſ. 7. 11.

(4.) Evidences of the Lord's free Love and Mercy were withdrawn, as appears by the Promiſe, *Verſe* 4. in this Caſe, People are under the Hidings of God's Face.

(5.) His Anger was many Ways intimated, as is likewiſe evident from what has been ſaid. And from *Verſe* 4. God not only forbears wonted Smiles, but really frowns on Backſliders.

(6.) Influences, the Dew from Heaven, as appears by the Words of our Text, are, in ſuch a Caſe, withheld; the Lord commands that no Rain rain on them; makes their Heavens Braſs; Supplies of the Spirit are withheld.

(7.) Hereon Growth is at a ſtand; they do not, till the Revival come, grow as a Lilly. In the cloſe of this Verſe, wherein the Text lies.

(8.) Hereon the very Root languiſheth, Faith and Love begin to fail, and wax cold, till reſtoring Grace come to make them caſt forth their Roots as the Cedars of *Lebanon.*

(9.) Barrenneſs follows, his Fruit-bearing Branches do not ſpread, till the Lord ſend a Revival. *Verſe 6.*

(10.) Sap and Beauty, the Beauty of a Profeſſion, and Sap or Vigour in the Duties of a Profeſſion, fail. The Beauty of the Olive that is, through the Abounding of inward Moiſture, beautiful even in Winter, is not then to be met with, *Verſe 6.* And hence,

(11.) The Savour of Holineſs, tranſmitting a Scent to Strangers, and commending Religion to thoſe unacquainted, which is *Verſe* as the Smell of *Lebanon,* of the Cedars and Frankincenſe Trees, is not then to be felt.

(12.) And to compleat all, General Uſeleſneſs to others follows, *Verſe* 7. They that dwe under the Shadow of decay'd Profeſſors a little better.

Here then is a ſhort but ſad View of th Caſe, all drawn from the Context. The Gui of unpardon'd Sin lies upon the Conſcienc

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Calamities hereby are brought on; in Straits, vain Confidences are tried and truſted to; Evidences of Divine Love are withdrawn, Wrath is intimate, Influences of the Spirit, the Dew of Heaven, are reſtrain'd; Growth is at a ſtand; Faith and Love, the Rooting Graces, languiſh; Leaves wither; Fruits fail; Smell is loſt; Uſefulneſs is gone. And is not this a true Character of ſome, who have ſometime of Day promis'd another Thing.

5. We Remark, That as this Caſe is at any Time truly ſad, ſo there are ſome ſpecial Seaſons wherein it is doubly ſad. I ſhall Name ſome of them.

(1.) Decays, when they turn common, in Times of general Defection from the Power of Religion, are extremely dangerous. If a Chriſtian fall, when all about him are lively, there is Hope of a Revival, ſitting under their Shadow, he may revive as the Corn, and grow as the Vine, *Verſe* 7. But when all are dead, none to cheriſh, excite, awaken, quicken one another, this is truly ſad, and the Caſe very hopeleſs.

(2.) It is ſad, when it befalls Profeſſors, at a Time when they are under ſpecial Calls to Livelineſs, when the Glory of God, the Credit of Religion, and the like, require a Teſtimony from Profeſſors, for their Defence againſt a Generation of profane and impudent Atheiſts and Oppoſers; this draws on the Curſe of *Meroz, that came not to the Help of the Lord againſt the Mighty.*

(3.) When difficult Duties are call'd for, then Profeſſors have ſtrong Work ſet them, contend-

contending againſt Sin, mourning over Abonations, Strokes impending to be held off.

(4.) They are ſad, when they befall Profeſſors in the Approach of Winter, ſad and ſharp Trials, that require Vigour to bear them out, and may prove dangerous to the moſt healthy Conſtitutions; ſuch threaten Death to Perſons already decay'd. How dangerous then is the Caſe of decay'd Chriſtians in our Day, when I fear all the Four concur?

6. We Remark, That as this Caſe is ſad, ſo it is not eaſily to be got out of: For,

(1.) It is ſeldom taken Notice of, till it come to an Height; and Diſeaſes come to an Height are not eaſily cur'd.

(2.) It affects the Noble Parts, the Root, Faith, and Love, the Heart, the Fruit, *&c.*

(3.) It is univerſal, it affects the whole Man, and the more univerſal any Diſorder is, the worſe ſtill it is to cure.

(4.) Inſenſibility makes uſually up one Part of the Diſtemper; and ſtill the leſs ſenſe there is of the Diſeaſe, the leſs Hope of Cure: For it argues an univerſal Weakneſs of the more Noble Parts. See *Hoſea* vii. 9. formerly quoted.

7. However deſperate the Caſe ſeems, yet it is not quite incurable; *There is Balm in* Gilead, *and a Phyſician there*; there is one who can heal Backſlidings, and throughly cure them. And this leads me on,

II. To enquire who they are that may expect a Cure. For Anſwer, we ſay, The Promiſe, in the Text, of this Great Phyſician, is directed.

1. To

1. To *Iſrael*; to the Church of God, a People in Covenant with God. There is no Cure but what is to be had from the Covenant; and it is only *Iſrael* who have a Claim here.

2. Whereas, all are not the true *Iſrael*, who are of *Iſrael*; that is, who are Members of the Church by outward Profeſſion: It is to be obſerved, that this Promiſe belongs only to the true Iſrael; theſe who are truly ingrafted in Chriſt by true Faith. There are Stony-ground Hearers, and Thorny-ground Hearers, who ſeem to flouriſh for a while, and afterwards decay and fall to nothing; there is no Recovery promis'd to them; *they want Root*, and therefore they are never to revive again. God may renew them, but this is a new Work; but this Promiſe belongs not to them. To them we may apply the Words of *Job*, concerning Man's State. But theſe that are the true Iſrael have Root; and therefore, to uſe the Words of *Job*, there is *Hope* of ſuch Trees, *That tho' they be cut down they may ſprout again, and that their tender Branches ſhall not ceaſe. Though their Root wax old in the Earth, and their Stock die in the Ground; yet through the Scent of Water*, of this Dew mention'd in the Text, *it will again bud, and bring forth Boughs like a Plant.* Wherefore, ye that find any Decays, and find that it is not with you as in Months paſt, have Need to look if ye are the true Iſrael.

Matth. 13. 21.

Job 14. 10, 11, 12, 14.

Job 14. 7, 8, 9.

3. The Promiſe is to *Iſrael*, after they have born the Indignation of the Lord for their ſinning againſt him. It is to the Godly Remnant, after the Lord ſhall have made them

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ſmart for their Departing. Many Times, tho the Lord forgive his People's Sins, and hea their Backſlidings, yet he will take Venge-
Pſal. 99.8. ance on their Inventions, as the *Pſalmiſt* has it Therefore ſuch have need to take on th
Mic. 7. 9. Church's Reſolution, *I will bear the Indigna tion of the Lord, becauſe I have ſinned againſ him.*

4. It is to *Iſrael* returning, and ſeeking Recovery from the Lord, in the Way of com manded and ſuitable Duty: Though Go heals Backſlidings *freely*, of ſovereign Grace yet he will diſpenſe this Grace in ſuch a Wa as may be for his Glory: And therefore, whe he has a Mind to recover a People, he ſend Calls to Repentance, as here, *Verſe* 1. He ſend Directions, as *Verſe* 2. 3. He makes thoſe Cal effectual, and ſets them in his Way, not the fanciful Paths of Mens deviſing. An when Iſrael is thus once awakned, and p upon ſuitable Work, then it is that the Lo graciouſly ſteps in, and heals their Backſlidin and proves to them as the Dew. Which lea me,

III. To enquire into the Means where this Recovery is brought about, and the C of this wonderfully ſad, and ſeemingly deſp rate Diſeaſe effectuate. And this is held o to us in the Promiſe, That *the Lord will as the Dew unto them.* The Meaning of t muſt now be opened, and we conceive the E preſſion leads to obſerve Three Things.

1. The Cauſe of this Recovery. The Lo letting out Supplies of his Spirit.

2. T

2. The Nature and Manner of working of thoſe Supplies of the Spirit, whereby the Recovery is effectuate.

3. The Effects of this Cauſe wherein the Recovery conſiſts.

1. This Expreſſion of the Lord's being as the Dew, points us to the Cauſe of this bleſſed Cure, Change or recovery; and as to this we are by it taught,

(1.) That it is the Lord Jehovah alone that is the Cauſe of it, even he who came on this Deſign, that his People might have Life, and might have it more abundantly. This Dew is from the Lord, as the Expreſſion is, *Micah* v. 7. It is he alone that heals Backſlidings, that pours out Supplies of Grace on the dry Ground. There is no other Hand, ſave his, that can cure this Diſeaſe. This is ſo plain in the Expreſſion, that he who runs may read it. Joh. 10. 10. Iſai. 44. 3.

(2.) This Expreſſion intimates, that this reſtoring Grace is an Iſſue of free Love. *I will be as the Dew, He has Mercy on whom he will have Mercy.* There is no other Riſe of it, but the ſovereign Will of God, his free Love, He *will love freely*, *Ver.* 4. And therefore in our Text it follows, *He will be as the Dew.* And indeed what the wiſe Man obſerves of the King's Favour, is beſt of all ſaid of this King's Favour, it is as the Dew on the Graſs. Prov. 19. 12.

(3.) This Expreſſion points out to us this, that there is a Communication from him of freſh Supplies of the Spirit, and of Grace, as the Dew ſitting upon the Herbs, though apparently it keep it ſelf diſtinct and intire, yet ſecretly inſinuates of its Moiſture into the

Plants; ſo the Lord really, without loſing any thing himſelf, lets out of his Spirit ſupplies
John 1. 16. of Grace, gives Grace, and more Grace from his fulneſs.

(4.) But this is not all, it is not ſaid meerly that the Lord will give Dew, but that he *himſelf will be as the Dew*, importing this, That it is by a new and near Manifeſtation of the Lord himſelf, an Approach or drawing near of God himſelf to the Soul, that the Soul is reſtored, and ſupplies convey'd. The firſt Life is imparted to Man at Converſion, by an Approach and Manifeſtation of the Lord in his Glory to the Soul: The God of Glory's appearing to
Acts 7. 2. *Abraham* in *Meſopotamia*, imparted the firſt Life to him; ſo in like Manner, it is a new Approach of the Lord himſelf to the Souls of decay'd Believers, it is the Riſing of the Sun of Righteouſneſs on them, with Healing un-
Mal. 4. 2. der his Wings, that is the Spring of their Recovery, and of all Supplies of Grace.

(5.) It teaches this alſo, That the outward Means whereby this Approach is made, this Diſcovery is given, are the Promiſes of the Word, as they are applied in Ordinances of his own Appointment, Word and Sacraments, through the Influence of that Spirit that is Manifeſted by them. This, I ſay, the Lord's holding himſelf Forth as the Healer of Back-ſlidings in the Promiſe here imports. And,

(6. Upon all this it follows, That the Means of Recovery on our Part, muſt be Faith cloſing with, eying, imbracing, depending on God, or the Lord holding himſelf forth thus as the Dew in the Promiſe, by the outward Means, the Ordinances of Worſhip. Thus

ye

ye ſee, the Promiſe look'd into gives us a ſweet Account of the Cauſe of this Cure. But this is not all; for,

2. From this alſo we may learn the Nature and Manner of working of theſe Supplies, that are the Cauſe of this Revival. That it is by freſh Supplies of the Spirit of the Lord, that this Recovery is carried on, is clear from what has been ſaid already, and from the Promiſe formerly cited, *Iſai.* xliv. 3. and from this, that Graces are all Fruits of the Spirit, in the firſt Production and Increaſe of them, are alſo aſcribed to him. This being clear, the Expreſſion as to the Nature and Manner of working of thoſe Supplies doth teach us. Gal. 5. 22, 23. 2 Cor. 3. 18.

(1.) That they are of a heavenly Extract and Original, *Hath the Rain a Father? or who hath begotten the Drops of Dew?* ſays God to *Job.* They are not the Effects of humane Induſtry, but of the Lords own Power. The Dew tarrieth not for Man's Induſtry to fetch it down, nor doth this heavenly Dew. Job 38. 28. Mic. 5. 7.

(2. That theſe Supplies in their outward Appearance, in ſo far as they are by us diſcerned, look to be but ſmall Things; ſo the Dew is but a ſmall Thing, yet works great Effects. In like Manner it is with this heavenly Dew; To many it looks ſo ſmall, that they can have no diſcerning of it; They cannot ſee it fall, and they will not ſee it lying.

3. The Expreſſion teaches us the Suitableneſs of thoſe Supplies. The Dew when it falls upon the Face of the Earth conveys and inſinuates into all that vaſt Variety of Plants, ſupplies ſuitable to the Nature of every one of them, and to the Nature of all the Different

Parts of the ſame Plant, the Root, Trunk, Branches, Leaves, Flowers, Fruit. In like Manner, every one, from the Lord, when he comes as the Dew, has ſuitable Supplies, and Supplies ſuited to every Grace.

(4.) The Expreſſion intimates the plentiful Meaſure of theſe Supplies, like the Dew that falls in Abundance. And,

(5.) It points out the imperceptible and ſecret Manner of the Conveyance of the Recovery by them. The Dew is not diſcern'd in its falling, far leſs is its Operation inſinuating Moiſture into Plants diſcern'd, or their growth by it. All that can be ſaid, is, that by Means of this they grow up, we know not how, as the word is, *Mat.* iv. 27. much more are the Supplies of the Spirit, and their manner of operating imperceptible, and not to be diſcerned by us.

(6.) The Expreſſion points out the wonderful Equality and Wiſdom in diffuſing or overſpreading theſe Supplies, ſo as to reach every Part: Dew falls on the Graſs, and is diſtributed over all of it, with inimitable Equality, on all Hands it wets, ſo that no Part wants; ſo the Lord diſtributes theſe Supplies with wonderful Wiſdom, when he falls as the Dew on the Soul; not one Part eſcapes, to allude to that Expreſſion, 2 *Sam.* xvii. 12.

(7.) The Suddenneſs of the Operation of theſe Supplies: As the Dew falls down ſuddenly: ſo it has very quickly remarkable Effects.

(8.) To add no more, the powerful Efficacy of thoſe Supplies is held forth; the Dew fallen upon the mown Graſs, yea, when it is withered, will make it revive again.

Thus

Thus we ſee this Expreſſion teacheth us, as to the Nature of theſe Supplies, that they are of a heavenly Original, ſuitable, plentiful, ſmall in Appearance; as to the Manner of their Conveyance and Working, that it is inſenſibly, or ſecretly, equally, or with due Proportion, ſuddenly and effectually. And this leads me,

3. To ſpeak of the Effects of theſe Outlettings of the Lord's Spirit, for the Recovery of his People, they will be ſuch as the Dew has, and we find them condeſcended on in the Text and Context; and I ſhall only briefly hint at them, as they are here in the Contextreckoned up, and elegantly ſet forth under ſeveral metaphorick Expreſſions or Similitudes.

(1.) The firſt Fruit or Effect, is Growth in all Grace. *He ſhall grow as the Lilly.* A humble beautiful Flower, that delights in the Valley, and grows apace, even among Thorns: Formerly their Growth was at a ſtand, now when the Dew falls, they grow again apace.

(2.) The ſecond Effect of this Dew, is rooting in Faith and Love: Love and Faith are compared to the Roots of a Tree: Becauſe, as Faith takes hold of Chriſt, and by Love cleaves to him, drawing Nouriſhment, Sap and Life, and Stability from him; ſo a Tree, by its Roots, takes hold of, cleaves to, and draws Nouriſhment from the Ground, compare *Eph.* iii. 17. *Col.* i. 23. 2. and 7. Well, in this Caſe we are told, *They ſhall ſend forth their roots as Lebanon*, or as the Margine reads it, *they ſhall ſtrike forth, or dart forth on all Hands*, in ſpight of all Oppoſition, their Roots.

(3.) Hereon, abounding in all the Duties of Religion follows, his *Branches ſhall ſpread*, or

as

as the Margine has it, *ſhall go out.* This thriving Root ſhall branch it ſelf out, or abound in all Duties toward God, and toward Man; as to many of which there was a Neglect before.

(4.) Next, There follows the Beauty of a thriving and lively, or ſappy Profeſſion, *His Beauty ſhall be as the Olive Tree,* that, through abundance of Juice, retains its Life and Beauty, even in Winter.

(5.) Upon this there enſues a continual Savour of Religion in the whole Converſation. *His Smell ſhall be as Lebanon.*

(6.) Hence again, Uſefulneſs to others, eſpecially in promoting and cheriſhing Religion in them, follows. *They that dwell under his Shadow ſhall return, they ſhall revive as the Corn, and grow as the Vine.*

(7.) And finally, hereon there ſhall be abundance of ſavoury Fruit both in him and others, that are cheriſhed by his Influence. *The Scent thereof ſhall be as the Wine of Lebanon,* where the choiceſt and beſt Grapes were to be found.

IV. The Reaſons of the Point come next to be enquired into, and here we muſt be very ſhort. And,

1. That God has bound himſelf thus by Promiſe, for the Recovery of his decay'd and Back-ſlidden People, is ultimately to be reſolv'd in free Grace and the Sovereignty thereof: As at firſt he has Mercy, becauſe he will have Mercy, and *on whom he will have Mercy*; ſo likewiſe he continues, upon the ſame Account, to purſue a Deſign of Mercy.

2. Another Reaſon is, The Immutability of his Nature. Having once engaged in a Deſign of

of ſaving a Soul, he cannot, without Contrariety to his Nature, give it over, nor quite it. and therefore muſt, in Compliance with his own Nature, hold on, and revive. *I am God, and change not, and therefore the Sons of Jacob are not conſumed.* Mal. 3. 6.

3. Chriſt has not only purchas'd, but interceeds for all that is neceſſary to the compleating eternal Redemption for his People; and their Union with him ſecures them in the Fruit of all his Purchaſe: But this is a wide Field, and I may not launch out into this Ocean.

Let us now make ſome Improvement of the Point. And,

I. For Information.

IS it ſo, that God has bound himſelf by Promiſe to revive decay'd *Iſrael* upon his Return. Then,

1. We may Hence learn the Sovereignty of free and rich Grace, that diſpenſeth all ſaving Bleſſings, not only without, but contrary to our Deſert.

2. See here alſo the wonderful Skill and Power of the great Phyſician, he can cure the moſt deſperate Diſeaſes, an univerſal Decay of Grace not excepted.

3. We may hence learn whence ſo many decay'd Chriſtians, in our Day, do not recover: It is not, becauſe there is no Balm in *Gilead*, nor Phyſician there; But either, becauſe they are not of the true *Iſrael*, and ſo want Root; or, becauſe

becauſe they return not to the Lord who can heal.

4. We may here learn the Fulneſs of Proviſion in the Covenant, the Ground of the Saints Stability, and their Happineſs hereon, with many other uſeful and important Things, on which we may not now inſiſt.

Many other Uſes of the Point, leſt I ſhould weary you, I ſhall now paſs, and conclude in a few Words to ſeveral Sorts of Perſons, of whom, I ſuppoſe, this Auditory is made up. And,

1. Some, and, I fear, not a few, are ſo far from looking whether they are thriving and flouriſhing in Grace, that they have never yet been concern'd to have the Truth of Grace, or make ſure, that they are really implanted in Chriſt: To ſuch we ſay,

1. The Grace of this Promiſe is not deſign'd to you; it is to the *Iſrael* of God, and the returning Penitent People of God, who are ſenſible of their Strayings; of theſe ye are none: And ſo have no Lot nor Portion in this Matter.

2. Nor is the Feaſt deſign'd in this Place for you; it is deſign'd for thoſe who have the Life of Grace to ſtrengthen them, and to recover thoſe who are decay'd, to revive their Spirits: And therefore,

3. We charge you, upon your Peril, meddle not with this Ordinance, as what belongs not to you: But,

4. If you will do it, I ſhall aſſure you, it will not make you grow; you are not capable of Growth wanting Root: Yea,

5. It

5. It will involve you in the Guilt of Blood, even of the Body and Blood of the Son of God: And therefore,

6. Your Work is in the firſt Place, to ſeek to get off the old Stock of Nature, and be planted in the Lord's Houſe, engrafted on Jeſus Chriſt, and to invite you and engage you to this Conſider,

(1.) Here ye ſee, though your Caſe is deſperate like, yet it is not really altogether without Hope. Here is a Phyſician that undertakes the Cure of very dangerous Diſeaſes. Yea.

(2.) He can cure yours: As he cures ſpiritually decay'd Souls; ſo he can quicken the Dead, and call Things that are not, as though they were.

(3.) He has already given Proof of this, in that all his People, when firſt he undertook for them, were dead; and he quickned them. Epheſ. 2. 1, 2.

4. He has declar'd that he deſigns, among dead Sinners, to have a Seed to ſerve him: And ſince he has promiſed to give Life to them that are dead: Therefore,

(5.) Wait on him, and ſeek Life, and ſeek it with your whole Heart.

(6.) Though ye cannot plead Merit, nor claim any particular Promiſe; yet throw your ſelves on ſovereign Grace, and wait there: Others who have done ſo, have ſped well, and ye have no Reaſon to dread the Iſſue.

II. Others there are, I make no Doubt, in this Aſſembly, who now are, and who have, for a long Time, been concern'd about Religion, but yet ſtill continue in a thriftleſs, barren and unthriving Condition; ſo that one knows

not what to make of their Religion, and they know not themſelves. To you I ſay,

1. This is a comfortleſs, and a very dangerous Condition, ye are not able to ſtand in a fair Day, and how will ye bear a Storm? Ye know not whether ye are Branches deriving Sap from the Root, or withered ones that are deſign'd for the Fire. If you wither now under the Droppings of Ordinances, ye are like to be in a worſe Caſe, if theſe are quite withdrawn.

2. Whence is it thus with you? You are not ſtraitned in Chriſt; he came, that his People might have Life, and that they might *have it more abundantly.* And he hath provided Promiſes of Growth and Increaſe, and Revival: And Ordinances are deſign'd for this End; particularly, this is the Deſign of the Lord's Supper now to be celebrate.

John 10. 10.

3. Ye muſt therefore look into your ſelves for the Cauſes, look whether you have taken hold of the Root, whether ye are in Chriſt, and whether if ye are ſo, ye are not negligent in improving this Union, by maintaining Communion with him: There muſt certainly be ſomething wrong here.

4. Up and beſtir your ſelves vigorouſly, dive, ſearch into the Cauſes of this; cry to him that ſearches *Jeruſalem,* that ſearches the Heart and Reins, to let you know your Caſe. Improve the Promiſes of Growth, and uſe the Means, particularly with due Caution and Fear, in the Way of the Lord's Appointment, uſe this Sacrament. Thoſe ſtrengthning and reſtoring Influences that, in the Text, are held forth under the Similitude of Dew, are here held

held forth, and offered under the Signs of Bread and Wine, the Means of Life, Strength and Nouriſhment.

III. Some, I hope, there are, tho', I fear, they may be few, who do thrive and flouriſh like the Lilly; and if any ſuch there are, to you I only ſay,

1. Be ſure that you be well rooted. Seeds that drop among Thorns, and in ſtony Places, may have a fair Spring, but thin Harveſt. Mat. 13. therefore try your ſelves, you may eaſily fall in Miſtakes. Some that only ſeem to be in Chriſt, may flouriſh in outward Profeſſion, and turn to nothing; Therefore try. It is your Duty now, eſpecially before the Communion, to try this to Purpoſe.

2. Mind. Tho' you are in Chriſt, that ſpiritual Decays may befal you; this ye have heard clear'd: And therefore be not high Minded, but fear.

3. If you would continue in this thriving and flouriſhing Condition, for the Lord's Sake ſeriouſly improve Union with Chriſt, abide in him, that is, keep up conſtant Communion John 15. 4. with him in Ordinances, and eſpecially in theſe that are appointed for Growth, among which this Ordinance is one, and a Principal one: And therefore ſlip not this Occaſion.

4. Reſt not in the bare Performance of Duty, but cry for the dropping of this Dew, for the Spirit's Influences, which only can make Ordinances uſeful.

IV. To ſuch who have been lively, but now are withered, we ſhould have ſpoken at large; this being the Caſe to which the Text relates, but Time will ſcarce allow: Only here,

1. For your Information, we ſay, Here you may learn.

(1.) That your Caſe is exceedingly dangerous.

(2.) That it is more eſpecially ſo, at this Time when it is common.

(3.) That if evil and trying Times come, which we have Reaſon to fear, it will be yet worſe.

(4.) Yet it is not deſperate, there is one that can cure.

(5.) Others have been cur'd.

(6.) In this Ordinance he offers himſelf ſuitable to your Caſe. Here is, (1.) Love in the higheſt Inſtance, to quicken Love. (2.) The livelieſt View of the Demerit of Sin. (3.) Supplies of ſpiritual Strength, and many mo Specificks, if I may allude to the Word us'd by Phyſicians.

2. For Direction, many Things might have been offered, but this Chapter, which has been all opened, affords Plenty of them; and if the Lord give you Underſtanding, a ſerious View of it, and what has been advanced for clearing it, will ſuggeſt them in great Variety. The Lord bleſs his Word, and make it good on this Occaſion.

SER-

SERMON V.

The Flight of Shadows, AND The eternal Day-break, for the Comfort of benighted Souls.

CANT. ii. 17.

Until the Day break, and the Shadows flee away. Turn my Beloved, and be thou like a Roe, or a young Hart upon the Mountains of Bether.

E need not ſpend Time in telling you that this Book is deſign'd to repreſent that intimate Fellowſhip that is betwixt Chriſt Jeſus and his Church, conſiſting of Souls eſpouſed to him. He is the Bridegroom, ſhe is the Bride, e Spouſe here ſpoken of.

Her Happineſs in the Enjoyment of his Pre-ce was unexpreſſible, *Verſ.* 3, 4, and 5. of s Chapter, when ſhe ſat under his Sha-w with great Delight, and found his Fruit ſweet

Sweet to her Taſte: But in the 8 Verſe, he has withdrawn; yet ſo, that ſhe *hears* his Voice, *ſees* him coming at a Diſtance, inviting her to ſweet Fellowſhip with him, and directing the Removal of what might obſtruct a good Correſpondence.

In the preceeding Verſe that introduceth our Text, the Spouſe encouraged by this Evidence of her Husband's Kindneſs, 1. Comforts her ſelf under preſent Diſtance in the *Continuance of that mutual Relation* betwixt him and her, *My Beloved is mine, and I am his.* (2.) However, ſhe had not his ſenſible Preſence as before, yet he was ſtill with Delight carrying on the Work of the Church's Salvation, and keeping up, if not more open and ſenſible, yet real and ſweet Communion with the Church, and all particular Believers in it. *He feedeth among the Lillies.* And then ſhe ſubjoins the Words of our reading, wherein we have theſe three Things conſiderable.

1. The Spouſe her preſent Caſe, ſhe is benighted, there are *Shadows* betwixt *Him and her.*

2. Her Comfort is, the Hope of an Approach of a glorious Day.

3. Her Work and Deſire till that Day come *Turn my Beloved.*

I. We have her preſent Condition, and this we may take up in two or three Particulars.

(1.) Her Beloved is at a Diſtance, is abſent as to her Senſe. This is clear from her Prayer for his Return.

(2.) She is benighted. Hence ſhe longs for the Day-break. It is true, ſhe was not, Believers are not abſolutely in Darkneſs at any Time,

Time, as the reſt of the World are; but at leaſt her Light was like the Prophet's Day, neither altogether dark nor light. And,

(3. The Conſequence of this, or Cauſe, perhaps, is, there are Shadows interpoſing betwixt her beloved and her. And it is by the Interpoſition of thoſe that her Sight of the Lord is obſtructed in whole, or in Part. I need not ſtand to tell you what it is that is intended by a Shadow. Here we are to underſtand both the Cauſe and the Effect by it. Whatever obſtructs a clear View, or clouds our Sun, and that Imperfection of Light, and unſatisfying Diſcoveries of Things thence ariſing, are both underſtood.

II. We have her Comfort, and that is in the Hope that a clear Day ſhall, ere long, *break*, and all *theſe Shadows* flee away, that is, all Obſtructions of Light, imperfect Reſemblances, or whatever keeps from a full and ſatisfying View, ſhall be gone.

III. We have her Deſire, or what ſhe would have in the interval, till that Day come. *Turn my Beloved, and be like a Roe, or a young Hart upon the Mountains of Bether.* The Meaning is in ſhort, till that Day come when I ſhall have uninterrupted Communion with thy ſelf. Be pleas'd here in the Way to allow me gracious Viſits, as my Caſe requires. Come over all the interpoſing Mountains of my Provocations, that obſtruct, as the young Hart or Roe skips over Hills ſwiftly, eaſily, pleaſantly. This is what ſhe ſeeks after, what ſhe prays for.

Interpreters find ſome Difficulty, whether to join the firſt Part of this Verſe with the laſt Part

Part of it, or with the Cloſe of the 16th *Verſe*. It is plain that this *Until* relates to the one or other: There is a full Stop before and after this Clauſe, which leaves us at Liberty to apply it either Way. There is nothing in the Senſe that carries it unavoidably to one more than the other. I do not know but it may be the ſafer Way to make it reſpect both, thus, Since thou wilt never fail to keep up Communion with thy People here, till they are brought to the full Enjoyment of thee, when *the Day ſhall break, and the Shadows flee away*, condeſcend to allow me, among others, till then, to ſhare in thy gracious Viſits.

If it is enquired, What Day is this, in the Proſpect of which the Spouſe comforts her ſelf? I anſwer, One of Two muſt be underſtood: The Goſpel-Day, when the Lord ſhines in Ordinances, the *Sun of Righteouſneſs ariſes with Healing under his Wings*; this is called *the Day-ſpring from on high*: Or, the Day of Chriſt's ſecond Appearance; this is called the *Morning*, in which the Juſt ſhall have Dominion, and the *riſing of the Day-ſtar in our Hearts*; which is oppoſed and preferred to the cleareſt Diſcoveries and Manifeſtations of God in Ordinances. Moſt part of judicious Interpreters incline this Way, and with them we join.

Mal. 4. 1. Luk. 1. 78. Pſal. 49. 14. 2 Peter 1. 19.

It may alſo be enquired, What are we to underſtand by the *Mountains of Bether*? Whether there were any Mountains of this Name in *Canaan*, is diſputed; but we are not concerned, ſince the Scope of the Words is plain, and is alſo favoured by the Signification of the Word. By them we muſt underſtand whatever interpo-

ſes

ſes betwixt her Lord and her. Theſe are the Mountains of *Diviſion* or *Separation.*

Thus you have a clear and eaſie View of the Words: It now remains that we take ſome practical Truths from them. Each Branch of them affords Ground for uſeful Obſervations. I ſhall only offer one from each part of the Words, and ſingle out what may be moſt proper for the preſent Occaſion, and diſcourſe it ſhortly. Well then, in the Words we took Notice of three Things.

I. The Spouſe her preſent Caſe, and that, as it has been explained, affords us this. Note,

That even they who are eſpouſed to the Lord, while here, are oft benighted, and are kept from that full and free Communion with their Lord, which they would deſire by interpoſing Shadows. Doctr. 1.

II. We have her Comfort as to this, which gives Riſe to our ſecond Obſervation.

That it is the Comfort of Believers, that a Day approaches, which will chaſe away all thoſe Shadows that now obſtruct their Communion with the Lord. Doctr. 2.

III. We have her Deſire in the Interval, till that Day dawn: Whence obſerve,

That it will be the Deſire and conſtant Endeavour of all that are in Chriſt, to have frequent Viſits from the Lord, ſuch as their Condition admits, and their Need requires, till that Day come. Doctr. 3.

It is the ſecond of theſe we deſign briefly to inſiſt on: It compriſes the firſt in it; and in the Application, if Time allow, Occaſion may offer of ſpeaking ſomewhat as to the third Point. The Doctrine then is,

That Believers have the Proſpect of a glorious Day approaching, the breaking whereof will chaſe away Doctrine to be inſiſted on.

away all thoſe Shadows that now interrupt their full Communion with the Lord. We need not
Pſ. 97. 11. be long in the Proof of it. *Light*, we are told *is ſown for the Righteous*; and the ſpringing of that Light is the Day we now ſpeak of. That ſuch a Day there will be, we have all Aſſuran-
Rom. 13. 12. ces that can be: We are told, *that the Night is far ſpent*, and *that the Day is at Hand.* We are given to underſtand, that in due time this Day
2 Peter 1. 19. will dawn, and *the Day-ſtar ariſe.* Yea, we
Rev. 21. 25. are told, that it is a *Day* never to be ſucceeded
Eph. 4. 30. by a *Night.* This is that Day of the Redemption of the *Sons of God*, even the great and notable Day, mentioned *Acts* ii. 20. elſewhere
2 Peter 3. 12. called the *Day of God.* This is that Day when the *Sun of Righteouſneſs* will appear with a ſeven-fold Luſtre in his higheſt Elevation, which cannot fail to ſcatter all Shadows. But in further Proſecution of this Point, we ſhall,

I. Name ſome of thoſe Things that are called *Shadows.*

II. Offer ſome Reaſons why they are ſo called.

III. Speak ſomewhat of the breaking of this Day, that will ſcatter them, and chaſe them away.

1. We are to enquire, What are thoſe Shadows that now interpoſe betwixt Chriſt and Believers? I anſwer,

1. There are the Remainders of natural Darkneſs, that draw a Vail over all the Things of God, and fill our Minds with Miſtakes and Prejudices about them, and Miſapprehenſions of our Lord. Natural Men are covered with groſs Darkneſs, ſo that they can-
1 Cor. 2. 14. not perceive the *Things of God*, but reckon them *Fooliſhneſs*; yea more, they are all *Darkneſs*, a Maſs

Maſs of *Ignorance*, Eph. v. 8. *Nothing but Blindneſs.* Now tho' Believers *are tranſlated out of Darkneſs into marvellous Light*; yet Darkneſs in part remains: *We know but in part*, and ſee but darkly, *as through a Glaſs*; and in ſo far as this obtains, it is as a Shadow.

2. A-kin to this is an evil Heart of Unbelief, that queſtions all the Diſcoveries that the Lord makes of himſelf, turns away the Mind from the Light, and raiſes Miſts, Prejudices, Exceptions that obſcure the Light of the cleareſt Manifeſtations. Of the Influence of this our Lord oft complained, even in his own Diſciples. Many a ſweet Diſcovery of the Lord does Unbelief deprive us of the Advantage of.

3. Diſordered Affections, Hope, Fear, Anger, Envy, Hatred, Pride, when they prevail in the Soul, prove like mariſhy Ground, raiſe Damps, obſcure the Face of our Sky, and withhold the Light and Beamings of the glorious Sun, and cover all with a Sort of Midnight Darkneſs. Now, as to theſe three, note, that they are always our Sin, as well as our Miſery and Unhappineſs.

4. Temptations, either from Satan or the World, oft-times interpoſe betwixt our Lord and his People, and obſcure the Diſcoveries of him, and diſcompoſe them, leading into wrong and frightful Apprehenſions of him, and taking off from the Way of Communion with him. Inſtances of this Sort abound: All that are concerned know more than enough of this Kind.

5. Frailty of Body ſometimes interpoſes and unfits for Attendance on the Lord, when he

might be enjoyed, as it was with the Disciples, with whom, *when the Spirit was willing, the Flesh was weak.*

Now these Two are not always our Sin, tho' oft-times they issue in it, and always are our Unhappiness. Tentations are not Sins, if not complied with, I mean, such as are from without; nor is bodily Frailty in it self our Fault.

6. Besides all these, other Things there are, such as the mysterious and dark Conduct of Providence, the Nature of Ordinances, which are at least but like a Glass giving a dark Prospect, the Sovereignty of God in coming and going, and his appearing in a great Variety of Ways: All these, and others of the like Kind also occasion Obscurity.

But as to these, it must be observed, that they are not faulty Causes, but innocent Occasions of this. In themselves they are holy, wise, useful, and suited to our present Condition, and Means proper for many excellent Purposes becoming God, and profitable to us; yet in so far as they one Way or other obstruct the full Discoveries of the Lord, designed for and desired by Believers, even they also may be justly reckoned among the Shadows: It derogates no more from them, than the setting aside of the Old Testament Institutions, as Shadows, to make Way for the Gospel Ordinances. Now let us proceed.

II. But why are these called or compared to Shadows? I answer,

1. Because they either do import the Imperfection *of Light*, or *cause it* one Way or other. The first Instance condescended on, *viz.*

The

The Remains of natural Darkneſs import a Mixture of Darkneſs, with any Light we have, and the other Things do either cauſe or occaſion this. Now a *Shadow* is either taken for the imperfect Image of a Thing, or for that Imperfection of the Light which occaſions it. You may conſider *Job* x. 22. with other Places to this Purpoſe.

2. They are called *Shadows*, becauſe they *render our Views* of the Lord, and *Diſcoveries of him imperfect*; ſuch as we have when the Light is yet but imperfect, as it is in the firſt Approach of the Morning and Twilight. We read of the *Shadows of the Evening*, their being ſtretched over a People, *Jer.* vi. 4. importing ſuch an Obſtruction of Light, as mars clear Views of Things, and leaves us but imperfect Diſcoveries of them. This is the Effect of the former.

3. They are like to *Shadows*, becauſe they leave us at Uncertainty about what we ſee. When we ſee but Shadows, we waver, are uncertain, unſteady, and ready to heſitate; even ſo is it with us, as to ſpiritual Things; while theſe remain, the Impreſſions are but faint and languid.

4. Becauſe, as Shadows, if they give us not frightful Repreſentations of Things, yet they leave us without that clear Impreſſion of them that may ſecure us againſt ſuch frightful Repreſentations of the Lord, and our own Mercies. When he appears to the Diſciples at Sea, they take him for a Ghoſt. But ſome of theſe Things mentioned really do diſguiſe and miſrepreſent the Lord, and in this Reſpect, they are as the Shadow of Death, moſt frightful and ter-

terrible: 'Tis true, others do not ſo; yet, through our Weakneſs, they occaſion ſuch miſtaken Apprehenſions. In a Word, in Shadows there is, for moſt part, ſomewhat irkſome; ſo here there is, and upon that Account it is, that they are ſo called.

5. They, like Shadows, always keep from diſcerning the true Luſtre and Beauty of the Lord, and ſpiritual Things in their native Glory. This always holds; we never ſee the full Luſtre and Glory of Things, but in a clear and unſhaded Light. This is the peculiar Glory of pure Light, to repreſent Things, not faintly, but in their full Beauty.

6. They are called Shadows, becauſe they give Opportunity, Occaſion and Advantage to ſuch as ſeek to impoſe on us falſe and miſtaken Apprehenſions of the Lord. Their Endeavours could never take, if there were not ſome Darkneſs ſomewhere, under which they hide themſelves, and the Snares they lay for us.

7. They are Shadows, becauſe they withhold not only Light, but heat in ſhady Places; there is a Mixture of Coldneſs as well as Darkneſs. This is deſirable, as to the ſcorching Heat of the Sun; but 'tis always ſadly our Loſs, to have the warming Influences of the Sun of Righteouſneſs withheld.

8. They obſtruct Comfort. Truly *Light is ſweet, and a pleaſant Thing it is for the Eyes to behold the Sun*: It is comfortleſs to want this, and eſpecially in a ſpiritual Senſe. Now theſe Shadows withhold it, as we ſee.

9. In a Word, Shadows make a Sort of a Night; they are the Companions of the Night, and

and partake of its Coldneſs, Irkſomeneſs, and diſappear with it; and ſo it is with thoſe: But now,

III. We next come to ſpeak of that *Day-break*, the Proſpect whereof is the Comfort, Joy and Hope of the Saints of God in their preſent Condition. What I have to offer, I ſhall digeſt into the few enſuing Obſervations.

1. Then, you are to obſerve that all who are eſpouſed to the Lord Jeſus, are *Children of Light, and of the Day*, made capable to diſcern Light, poſſeſſed with a Love of it, having got ſome Taſte of its Sweetneſs, ſome Glimpſe of its Glory. Yet,

2. Their Condition here-away, through the Interpoſition of thoſe Shadows mentioned, is oft-times dark, cold, irkſome, weary and uneaſie. Many-times they paſs Days, nay Weeks, or Months, without the Light of Sun or Stars.

3. But even when it is ſo, this is their Comfort, that there is a *Day* a-coming, which will diſpel that irkſome and frightful Darkneſs that now covers all.

4. It is confeſſed, that many times, if they look round them, there is no Sign, no preſent Appearance of a Day, but, as it is toward Midnight, Darkneſs growing, and Light diſappearing.

5. Yet even then, when it is thus, they have this, which is a better Ground of Expectation than thoſe Appearances would be, that there is, as for the Coming of the *natural Day*, Gen. viii. 22. Jer. xxxiii. 20. ſo for the Coming of this *Day*, a ſettled *Ordinance*; 'tis determined,

pro-

promiſed, and cannot fail, more than God's *Covenant with the Night and Day.*

6. Poor Souls that are in this Condition know, that however dark it may be with you, yea, tho' the Darkneſs increaſe, yet the *Sun of Righteouſneſs* is on his Way rejoycing, as a *ſtrong Man*, to run his Race. Behold, he *comes quickly*; he is not *ſlack* as to *his Promiſe*; he advances like the natural Sun, as faſt when we ſee him not, as when we ſee him. This is comfortable.

7. Tho' it is not Day, nor is the Darkneſs fully removed, when the Sun appears not: yet even then he imparts and reflects Light by Means appointed for that End. When the Sun is under the Horizon, the Light he reflects on the Moon, makes a Sort of Day in the Night; even ſo there is the *Word* that ſhines, tho' with derived Light, *as a Light in a dark Place*. 'Tis true, this is a variable Light, frequently clouded as to us, tho' in it ſelf it abides for ever the ſame.

8. *The Night is far ſpent.* 'Tis long ſince there was Mention made of *his coming quickly.* Darkneſs has continued long, and the growing of it this Day is not unlike the Approach of the Blackneſs of Midnight-darkneſs, which, tho' terrible in it ſelf, yet preſages a ſpeedy Turn.

9. The breaking of this glorious Day affords all the Variety of Pleaſure, uſeful, cheering, delightſome Advantages; yea, and greater than the breaking of the natural Day doth. Come now, let us take a Proſpect of them, and compare them a little,

1. As

(1.) As it is with Reſpect to the *Natural Night*, ſo it is, and will be with this Night Believers are now under. No Sooner ſhall it come to its Darkeſt, but there ſhall ſpeedily appear the welcome Forerunners of approaching Day. The *Day-Star* ſhall ariſe. What this is, Time will not allow me now to enquire, only in the General, this is ſure, that when the Church's Night is darkeſt, it ſhall not be long before the Lord's Remnant ſhall have ſome pleaſant Preſages ariſing like the *Day-Star* in their Hearts. 2 Pet. 1. 19.

(2.) As it is with Reſpect to the natural Day-break, the poor benighted Traveller ſhall not be long in Suſpenſe, whether what he ſees is only a deluſive Appearance, or a Preſage of approaching Day; for *quickly* on the Back of this, ſhall it be, as it was in the Morning of the Goſpel Day; *in the Shadow of Death Light will ſpring up.* Mat. 4. 16.

(3.) As 'tis with the firſt Dawnings of natural Light, ſo here it will be, whereas all was dark juſt before. It will be Matter of ſome Wonder, whence ſo *ſuddenly*, ſo ſurpriſingly thoſe welcome Rays ſpring up, the Sun, the glorious Spring not yet appearing.

(4.) Here it may, and readily will be with the Saints of God, as it is with the Traveller bewildred, frighted, confus'd with the Darkneſs of the Night, and not thinking yet of the Approach of Day, the firſt Dawnings of Light may, perhaps, rather increaſe his Confuſion, than relieve. I make no Doubt but the Approach of our Lord the bleſſed Sun of Righteouſneſs may at firſt be ſomewhat frightſome to his own Remnant, as well as to the Beaſts of Prey, eſpecially to thoſe who are

Chriſt's Reſurrection, John 20. and the Effect it had on them that came to the Sepulchre clears this.

in the Condition now mention'd, rather poring on preſent Darkneſs, than looking out for the approaching Day.

(5.) The firſt ſhooting Rays of Light do not preſently diſpel Night, or give perfect Diſcoveries, eſpecially of Things at a Diſtance, tho' they leave not quite in the Dark as before; ſo here 'tis like it will be; much of what, ere long, is clearly to be ſeen, may, for a Time, appear as Things in the Day-dawning: Men look like Trees; we are affrighted at that imperfectly ſeen, which afterwards will fill with Cheerfulneſs and Delight. The ſweet Variety of Trees, Mountains, Valleys, Towns, and all that pleaſant Proſpect that afterwards is Matter of Wonder, Joy, Delight, imperfectly ſeen, affords ſo many frightful Impreſſions.

(6.) As it is with the Riſe of the Morning Light, ſo it is with reſpect to its Increaſe; it grows as ſurpriſingly as pleaſantly; yet myſteriouſly as at firſt it ſprung up, ſo it will be with reſpect to the Light of this Glorious Day. It will, when the Sun approaches, make quick, glorious Advances. All the Accounts of Chriſt's glorious Appearance plainly hold forth this, *It will ſhine more and more to a perfect Day*; tho' we cannot tell how, or whence. *Where is the Way where Light dwelleth?* As this in Nature is a puzzling Myſtery, 'tis no leſs ſo in Grace.

Job 38.19. (7.) When Light grows, it will ſtrike a panick Fear into the Hearts of Beaſts of Prey, *devouring wild Beaſts betake themſelves to their Dens. The Morning is to them as the Shadow of Death.* Tho' in the Night they devour, they prevail, the Upright ſhall have Dominion over them in the Morning.

Pſal. 104. 22.

Job 24.17.

(8.)

(8.) When the Sun of Righteouſneſs appears with the Increaſe of pleaſant Light, chearing Heat will come along, and the Coldneſs of the Night will be gone. 'Tis the Abſence of the Sun that leaves all cold, dead and Lifeleſs. The Sun's Return gives new Vigour.

(9.) When that pleaſant Day breaks, Sleepers awake, Drowſineſs goes off, the Birds ſing, the Flowers open, Things appear in their Native Luſtre, Fears evaniſh, the Ways are clear, Snares are ſeen, a Thouſand Doubts that troubled before evaniſh, perfect Views come in place of dark and ſhadowy Reſemblances. Oh, what Pleaſure is here! All was dark and hideous before; now all is glorious, clear, pleaſant, chearing, refreſhing and beautiful. If one is abroad in the Night, and obſerves the Break of Day, what a World of Wonders will he ſee in it! But there will be yet more when this glorious Day ſhall dawn. *When the Sun of Righteouſneſs ſhall appear as a Bridegroom.* And this leads me,

(10.) To obſerve, That after all theſe pleaſant and ſweet Beginnings, Dawnings of Day, the *Sun Himſelf* appears, that Maſs, that Fountain of Light, Warmth, Life, Vigour; ſo here it will be. He ſhall rend the Clouds who is our Sun, and appear in the Glory of his Father, and his own, with a glorious Train of Saints and Angels, deck'd as a Bridegroom. Upon his appearing leſſer Lights will diſappear; the Sun, the Moon, the Stars, will be eclipſed, and have no Glory, by reaſon of that which excels. The Birds of Paradiſe then ſhall ariſe out of the Duſt, and being chang'd in a Moment, they who have lien among the

Pots ſhall be like Doves, whoſe Wings are covered with Silver, and Feathers with yellow Gold: Then ſhall they ſoar into the Air to welcome the riſing Sun *with a new Song in their Mouth.* Then ſhall they ſee what *Eye hath not ſeen, nor Ear heard, nor has it entred into the Heart of Man* Iſa. 64. 4. *to perceive.* None that had ever ſeen the Day break before, can, by the Hundred Part, conceive the Wonders appearing in the Dawning of the Natural Day; and to attentive Obſervers, tho' it is oft ſeen, yet ſtill new Matter of Wonder offers in it: Much more is it ſo here, and will be ſo to Eternity.

Then, then, O poor benighted Souls! unſpeakable ſhall your Advantages be.

(1.) All theſe Things about which you have been perplex'd and confounded, ſhall be ſeen in a clear Light. *In his Light ye ſhall ſee Light.* How many Doubts that the Darkneſs of the Night render inextricable, are inſtantly diſcuſs'd, and not the leaſt Heſitation left about them! Darkneſs is the Mother of Doubts, Wavering, Uncertainty, and all their Conſequences; and Light chaſes away Night, and all theſe Children of Night.

(2.) But that which will add to the Glory and Happineſs of the Day, will be, the Perfection and Strength of our diſcerning Power: Now Brightneſs is troubleſome, and we cannot ſteadily behold it; but then our Eyes will anſwer the Light, there will be a Perfection and bleſſed Proportion; *when that which is perfect is come, that which is in Part ſhall be done away.*

(3.) Here there will be *overpowering Evidence*, fully ſatisfying the Mind, and leaving no Poſſibility of Doubt; we loſe now much of

of the Sweetneſs of the Lord's Diſcoveries of himſelf, his Love, his Grace and Condeſcenſion; when we take a View of them, preſently Unbelief comes in, How can theſe Things be? Is't poſſible that ſuch Things, ſo great Things ſhould be to me and for me? Oh! what Refreſhment would we find, were it not for theſe Staggerings? But then overpowering Evidence will not allow the leaſt Scruple to confound, or divert from Delight, in what you ſhall then know to be Truth. And,

(4.) Quickly will ye feel the bleſſed Effects *of the Sun of Righteouſneſs*, Diſeaſes will be heal'd, Coldneſs, Deadneſs, Drowſineſs will all be gone.

(5.) And that which Crowns all is, *there is no more Night to be.* Here there is a Succeſſion of Day and Night; but then, Day for evermore. No Doubts about Truths, Promiſes; no faint Views, no more queſtioning your Intereſt in them, no Mountains of *Bether*, no Lettices of Ordinances, no dark Proſpect more; but Light, Day without a Cloud in it, or Night to follow it: All Day, no Dark Corner, and the Light more than the Light of ſeven Days of all our Days.

But it is now Time that we come to the Uſe of the Point, in a few Inferences.

1. You ſee here the Difference betwixt the Child of Light, and the Children of Darkneſs. *Light is ſown for the Righteous, but they that compaſs themſelves about with Sparks of their own kindling, ſhall ly down in Sorrow, and the Blackneſs of Darkneſs is reſerved for them.*

2. We need not wonder to ſee many Changes in the Condition of the People of God, becauſe 'tis now Night with them, a Seaſon liable to many Changes.

3. It

3. It is all your Concernment, more eſpecially, of you who have been at the *Lord's Table*, to try your ſelves, whether you are Children of the Light and of the Day, *to whom the Sun of Righteouſneſs ſhall ariſe*, and from whom he ſhall chaſe away thoſe Shadows.

(1.) Have ye ever got ſuch a Sight of the Lord, as has ſullied the Luſtre of other Things, and taken your Hearts off them? *a Sight of the God of Glory* does this. *A View of the Pearl makes to part with all joyfully; and forſake all for Chriſt.* Compare *Matth.* xix. 17. with *John* vi. 68.

Acts 7. 2, 3, 4. Matth. 13. 44, 46.

(2.) Are you ſenſible of, and ſuitably affected with the Lord's Comings and Goings, Hidings and Appearances, as we ſee the Spouſe was in the Context, and through this whole Book.

(3.) Can ye live contentedly without him? Can ye bruick his Hiding of himſelf from you? If you can, there is no Light in you; you are in Darkneſs even until now.

(4.) *Next*, Are you among them who wait, long and look for his Appearance, and relieve your ſelves with the Proſpect of it? To ſuch he is to appear *a ſecond Time, without Sin unto Salvation.*

Heb. 9. 28.

Now a Word, and we have done.

1. To you who are yet in Darkneſs, we ſay, (1.) If you have been at the Lord's Table, you ſure *have not diſcern'd the Lord's Body*, and ſo *have eat and drunk Judgment to your ſelves.* Again, (2.) At preſent whatever you may think, it is black Night with you, and all the Terrors of the Night belong to you. And (3.) You have no relieving Proſpect, the Breaking of this Day will be terrible to you, *a Day of Gloominеſs*

neſs and thick Darkneſs. Any Sparks you're now compaſs'd with will be gone. And (4.) *The Blackneſs of Darkneſs is reſerv'd for you for ever*, if you continue in that Caſe; wherefore, for the Lord's ſake, bethink your ſelves in Time, and beſtir your ſelves, *look to him, who opens the Eyes of the Blind.*

2. I have a Word to you, who are not only Children of the Light, but under preſent Clearneſs, we ſay, this Doctrine bids us ſay, (1.) Mind, 'tis not yet perfect Day with you, 'tis but like Moon and Star-light ye enjoy. Again, (2.) Be ſober, ye cannot tell how ſoon that Light you have may be clouded. There are many Changes in the Night, and many Dangers not to be ſeen by that imperfect Day. (3.) Yet while ye have it, ye do well to take heed to it, as a Light ſhining in a dark World. But (4.) Reſt not in or on Attainments, but watch for the Morning of this glorious Day.

3. To any of you who are Children of the Light and of the Day, but yet are at preſent under Clouds. (1.) Think not ſtrange of this, as if ſome odd Thing befell you: It is a Caſe common to you with others, and is ſuitable to your Condition hereaway. (2.) Mind, in this imperfect State, this Courſe has its own Uſefulneſs, the Night is profitable as well as the Day. (3.) Your Darkneſs will not be perpetual, Light is ſown for you, and it will ſpring forth ſpeedily. (4.) The Darkneſs of your Night will make the dawning of the Day the more ſweet. (5.) Till the Day dawn with the Spouſe, ſtay your ſelves on the Name of the Lord, and his ſtanding Relation to you. Hold by this, that *he is your Beloved*, and *you his*; this the Prophet directs to. (6.) Take heed

heed to the ſure Word of Prophecy, and read in it from the firſt dawning of Light till Mid-day, till the Sun come to its full Height; to allude to the Practice of *Ezra, Neh.* viii. 3. who read in the Law from the Morning until Mid-day. (7.) Cry for Viſits till that Day come, with the Spouſe in the Text. (8.) Comfort your ſelves with the Proſpect; it ſurely will come, tho' now there may be little Appearance of it, and will clear many Things you cannot now ſee through.

I ſhall wind up all in a general Word of Exhortation, to all you who profeſs your ſelves to be the Children of the Light, and have approach'd the Lord's Table; and that in the Words of the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 13. from the 22d Verſe, *The Night is far ſpent, the Day is at hand: Let us therefore caſt off the Works of Darkneſs, and let us put on the Armour of Light. Let us walk honeſtly as in the Day, not in Rioting and Drunkenneſs, not in Chambering and Wantonneſs, not in Striſe and Envying; but put ye on the Lord Jeſus, and make no Proviſion for the Fleſh.* Blemiſh not your Character, diſhonour not your Profeſſion, give not Enemies an Handle to blaſpheme; live in the Faith of this Day-breaking; let this be your Stay, your Joy in this dark Day, when the Earth ſhakes and reels like a drunken Man. All is cloudy and black, Kingdoms tremble, Crowns totter, and Hearts full of deſponding Fears; fix this, dwell on it. The Hope of it will be your Comfort, until the Day break, and the Shadows flee away; and cry for Chriſt, that he may turn till then, and *be like a Roe or a young Hart upon the Mountains of* Bether.

Even ſo come Lord Jeſus.

F I N I S.